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MY FIRST JOURNAL.

LONDON: RICHARD CLAY, PRINTER.

MY FIRST JOURNAL.

MACMILLAN AND CO.
Cambridge
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London.
1860

MY FIRST JOURNAL;

A BOOK FOR THE YOUNG.

BY

GEORGIANA M. CRAIK,

AUTHOR OF "RIVERSTON," "LOST AND WON," ETC.

MACMILLAN AND CO,

Cambridge;

AND 23, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN,

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MY FIRST JOURNAL.

LEIGH-HILL, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

Wednesday, July 4th, 1855.—YESTERDAY was my birthday, and such a beautiful day. I was eleven years old. I had four presents; from papa and mamma, and uncle Robert, and cousin Julia. Mamma gave me a rosewood workbox, so beautifully fitted up with red velvet inside, and scissors, and cotton, and needles, and everything I want; and papa gave me a new Bible in a beautiful case, with a rim of gold round it, and a gold clasp, and on the clasp "K. R." engraved, for Kate Rockwood —the most beautiful Bible, I think, I ever saw. And Julia gave me a pretty little purse which she had netted for me herself, of green and gold, with gold tassels made in the shape of little bells, and papa

says I am to keep it until I am grown up, and if I do he will give me a sovereign then to put into it; but he won't tell me *when* he will call me "grown up," so I don't know when I shall get my sovereign: and uncle Robert gave me this beautiful journal book.

I could not think what it was at first. He gave it to me wrapped up in brown paper, and told me to undo it, and when I undid it and saw the pretty scarlet binding, I thought of course that it was a printed book for reading; but when I opened the pages there wasn't a bit of printing there—nothing but clear ruled paper, like a great account book; and I couldn't help being a little disappointed, for I began to be afraid that, like Julia's purse, it was something to be put away till I was grown up; and I thought too, that, even if I *was* grown up I shouldn't care very much to be given an account book for a present. But before I said anything, for I didn't quite know what to say, uncle Robert began to laugh, and exclaimed:—

"Now, there's a nice puzzle for you! you won't

find out what you are to make of that, I see, though you are looking very wise over it, Katie."

So I laughed too, then, and said that I couldn't think what it was for at all; unless it was for accounts, I added after a moment, and then I was sorry that I had said it, for they all laughed at me so, and papa exclaimed, that the thought of the sovereign he had promised me must have turned my head; but I was glad at any rate that it was *not* an account book, and so when they had done laughing, I asked uncle what it really was for.

"It's for writing a history of England in," he said very gravely.

"Oh no, uncle! is it?" I exclaimed.

I was half afraid for a moment that it was; but I saw them laughing again, so I knew he was only joking.

"For an epic poem, then," he said. "We all know you're great in poetry, Katie."

"What a shame of you, uncle!" I cried.

And it really *was* a shame, for I have never written a bit of poetry in my life, except once,

when I was quite little, when I made a little song about a bird I had; and it was so bad that it has been kept up as a joke against me ever since.

"But do tell me, please," I said.

And so then, at last, he told me that it was for a journal; and when I asked him what I was to write in it,—for I have never kept a journal in my life,—he told me that I was to write about all I did, and all I thought too if I liked, and he told me to begin to-day, and put down all that happened to me yesterday: and so, as I have more to say for yesterday than I daresay I shall have for most days, I think I will do that, and begin at once.

We had breakfast as soon as I had been given all my presents, and then—for as it was my birthday there were no lessons—Julia and I went away to the glen at the side of the hill, and picked each a heap of wild flowers, all the prettiest kinds we could get, and when we had got as many as we wanted, we sat down on stones by the little stream, and talked, and sang, and made the flowers into wreaths; into five wreaths, for Julia, and Alice

Wigan, and Fanny Norris, and Laura Stephens, and me. Julia made mine, and it was the most beautiful of all; but she said that was right, because I was the queen of the day, and so I ought to have the prettiest. Then when they were all done we ran away home, for they had taken so long to make that it was getting late, and we were afraid that somebody might have come. But no one had, so we put on our white frocks, and were quite ready dressed before even Fanny came, though I had asked her to come early. But she waited for Laura, and Laura waited for her brother, who could not get out of school till half-past twelve, and so they came all together, and were not here till quite one o'clock; after Alice Wigan and her brothers had come some time.

When we were all assembled at last, and were just thinking what we should begin to do, mamma came in, and said that before we began anything we must come away and have some lunch, and so we all went into the dining-room together; but when we got there, there wasn't anything like

lunch to be seen; there wasn't a thing of any kind upon the table.

"Oh, mamma, there's nothing ready yet!" I cried out; but she only laughed, and told us to follow her, and we all went out by the French window into the garden, and there upon the grass was the prettiest lunch laid out,—cakes, and fruit, and lemonade, and milk, and ever so many more nice things; and all ornamented so prettily with flowers. We gave quite a little shout at seeing it, for we were all so surprised, and thought it so pretty; and it was so kind of mamma to have done it for us. They said that I was hostess, and must do the honours; so mamma settled what was to be called the top of the table, and I sat there, and Julia sat at the bottom, and then we had such a merry lunch. And when it was over we all went up the hill, and the boys made us go to all the most difficult parts, and we had such scrambling, and tumbling, and laughing, and—it was such a pity—our poor wreaths got so torn to pieces that there was hardly a flower left in them when we got home

again; but then we had enjoyed ourselves so that we didn't mind that much.

We had dinner at half-past three—ourselves alone, without papa, or mamma, or uncle; and we were so sorry that we were obliged to have it indoors, for it was not nearly so nice as the lunch had been. They all said so, and I said, should I ask mamma to let us have tea on the grass? and everybody cried, "Yes!" and Robert Wigan said—"Suppose we send in a Round Robin!" I didn't know what a Round Robin meant, but he told me to get a sheet of paper and he would soon show me, so I got the paper, and then Robert went away with it, and a pen and ink, to compose the petition he said, and presently he came back with it all written; done so funnily, calling us mamma's "humble petitioners;" and he told us where to sign our names, and we signed them all in a circle, so that nobody could tell who had signed first; and then I got an envelope, and put it inside, and addressed it to mamma, and sent it to her by Hannah. And presently mamma sent back an answer to say that our petition should be

granted, and we were all glad, and the boys set up a cheer for her.

And then we went back to the garden, and had great fun again till tea-time came, swinging and playing at hide-and-seek in the wood. It was such a beautiful day all the time, and not too warm for running about; though to be sure we *did* get once or twice very hot. We had tea at half-past six, and I think it was almost the nicest tea I ever was at. They put me at the top of the table again (we really *had* a table this time), and I poured the tea out, and Robert and Tom Wigan would sit one on each side of me, to help me they said; and Robert always put in the sugar, and Tom the cream, and we had great fun; only I should have done it better alone, for they neither of them knew anything about making tea, and they would put in two or three times as much cream and sugar as I told them.

But I think the nicest part of all the day came when tea was over, for we had just got up, and were wondering what we should do next, when

papa, and mamma, and uncle, all came to us from the house with an old man with a fiddle, and papa said that the old man was going to play to us, and that we were to dance if we liked. We were so happy! So the man began to play, and we began to dance; and we had such fun, making uncle come amongst us and dance a polka with me, and teaching him the steps till we could scarcely stand for laughing; and we went on till it was beginning to get dark, and then mamma said that we had better come in, for she was afraid of the grass being damp. But we were so sorry when it was over.

And then, to finish off, we had a fine game at blind man's buff in the dining-room, with the tables moved aside; and then some cake and lemonade; and at last, about ten o'clock, they went away. I was so sorry when it was all at an end, for they had all been so nice—particularly Fanny and Tom, and Julia of course. I wish birthdays came oftener than once a year!

I didn't feel a bit tired when they were gone,

but mamma said we must not sit up any longer, so we said good night to them all and went to bed, and though I had thought that I could have sat up so well if mamma had let me, yet I think I must have fallen asleep almost the moment I lay down, for I hardly even remember Sarah's taking away the candle. It had been such a nice day altogether! To-day seems very dull after it, and all this morning I could hardly do my lessons at all for thinking of it, and wishing that it could come over again.

Uncle Robert came in just as I was writing those last words, and tried to peep over my shoulder, and see what I was saying, but I wouldn't let him, and shut up the book, and then he tried to steal it away from me, and I held it so tight he couldn't get it, and we had such laughing about it. And now he has gone away, and mamma has come, and she says I have been writing too long, and that it won't do to spend so much time over my journal; but then, of course, there won't be nearly so much to say of most days as there was

of yesterday; and, indeed, I don't intend to write something for *every* day at all, for uncle says I need not. And I am not going to write anything more now, for Julia and I are going up the hill till tea-time.

Monday, July 9th.—A letter came to uncle this morning that we are all so sorry about, for it was to tell him of some business that will need him to be at home by the end of the week, and he says Julia must go with him too, because he could not trust her to travel alone. I am so disappointed, for I thought they would have stayed a fortnight longer; and Julia is so sorry too, that she quite cried when uncle said she must get ready to go home in a few days. She said she thought he might let her stay behind, and try and send somebody for her, but he said it was out of the question, and I am afraid he was rather vexed at her asking it.

I have only written these few words, just to say that they are going, and I must not stay to set

down anything more, because Julia says that now, when she has only such a short time longer to be here, it is a shame of me to be spending time over my journal, and I think it is too, and so I shan't write again until they are gone. They go on Friday.

Friday, July 13th.—They are both gone, and the house seems so quiet and dull. I am going to write a little just because I don't know what else to do, for I am quite tired of wandering about the garden alone. Oh, I wish so that Julia was here again! I feel as if I didn't care to do anything or go anywhere now that she is gone. And she says that she is sure she shall be just as dull without me when she gets home. Oh dear! I wish it was a week after this, that I might be a little used to it; I don't know how to set about anything.

They went away at twelve, and it was not a nice morning at all, for we were all so sorry, and there was packing to do. Mamma packed Julia's

things, and Julia and I helped her. Mamma gave her a little dressing-case—such a pretty one—with little bottles, and ever so many things, inside. Julia liked it very much. Dear uncle was so kind when they went away, and he said that I must come and return Julia's visit very soon, and he asked mamma if she would let me come at Christmas; but mamma wouldn't promise, only she said she would think of it, so I think that perhaps I may go. I was very unhappy when I had to say good-bye to them, and mamma was very sorry that they were going too. Papa went with them in the chaise to the station, and saw them off.

Monday, July 16*th.*—We were so sorry yesterday to hear that old nurse Annie was very ill. Little Harriet Barton came over to tell us, and in the evening mamma went up to see her; and when she came back she said she was afraid Annie was very ill indeed; but the doctor is not sure yet what it is, only it is some kind of fever. Mamma has gone up again this morning, and I

wanted to go with her, for I like old Annie very much; but she wouldn't let me. She has been away a long time now: I am afraid Annie must be worse.

Friday, July 20th.—Old Annie is very ill, and mamma is very unhappy about it, for Annie nursed her when she was a baby, and has always been so fond of her, and has lived with her almost all her life. She goes a great deal to see her, and to sit beside her, and read to her. I am afraid papa doesn't like her going so much, for he always looks grave when she is away, and seems uneasy if she does not come back at any time when she has said she would; but I don't know why he should be so, for I asked mamma yesterday if there was any fear of her catching the fever from Annie, and she said no, there was not, for the doctor said it was not infectious; so I don't know why papa should look so grave, unless it is about old Annie herself. Mamma says she is so ill that she is afraid she will die.

Sunday Evening, July 22d.—I am afraid there is something happening that they won't tell me,—something about old Annie. Mamma went up to see her while papa and I were at church this evening, and when we got home again she had not come back. But a little while ago, as I was sitting alone by one of the drawing-room windows, I saw her coming in by the meadow, and I ran out and went to meet her. I said, "How is Annie, mamma?" and she said very quickly, "Not any better, dear;" and then she asked, "Where's papa, Katie?" I said I thought he was in his own room, and she told me to go back to the drawing-room, for she wanted to speak to him.

She looked so anxious, and spoke so gravely, that I was frightened, and exclaimed, "Oh, mamma, is Annie dead?" But she said at once that she was not, and then began to speak about something else in a much more cheerful voice, so that I nearly forgot how grave she had looked, until just as I was going away she stooped down as if she was going to kiss me, and then all at once drew

back with such a strange look in her face, and instead of kissing me properly, just put her lips for a moment on my forehead, and then sent me away so quickly that I couldn't ask her anything; and ever since she and papa have been together in his study. I don't know what she meant; I wish she would come back again. I wonder if it—Oh, there is papa's door opening at last.

Monday, July 23*d.*—Papa and mamma came back to the dining-room together last night, but they didn't say anything to me, and I didn't like to ask if anything had happened; and, indeed mamma looked so much as she always does, that I almost think I must have been wrong in fancying that anything was the matter,—for of course it was quite natural, coming from poor Annie, that she should look grave.

But I cannot write anything more about it now, because I am going away. I am going to stay at Alice Wigan's for a few days. Mr. Wigan came over this morning, and asked me,—I don't mean

that he came on purpose to ask me, but he asked me when he came;—and he said that if I could be ready in a couple of hours he would call again and take me back with him; and papa and mamma both said that I might go.

I was so surprised when mamma came and told me that Mr. Wigan had asked me, for I never have been at their house to stay before; and it's so funny, too, their wanting me in such a hurry. But I daresay I shall enjoy it very much, for I like Alice, and Mr. and Mrs. Wigan too; and the house is very pretty.

I must stop now, because I am going to take my journal with me, and I must give it to mamma to put in my trunk. We haven't heard this morning how Annie is, but I suppose mamma will go up and see her when I'm gone.

Friday, July 27th.—I have no time to write any proper journal now, but I have taken out my book for a moment just now, because I had a letter from papa this morning, telling me that dear old Annie is dead. She died on Wednesday night.

I am so sorry—and so sorry for poor mamma. I wish I could have seen Annie again; I think they might have let me. She was the nicest and kindest old woman I ever knew. I don't feel to-day as if I cared a bit for playing, for I can't help thinking of Annie every moment.

Tuesday, July 30th.—I thought I should have been home by this time, for mamma said I was only to come for a few days; but Mr. Wigan told me this morning, when we were at breakfast, that he had just had a letter from papa, and that papa said I might stay with them a little longer. I don't know why Mr. Wigan asked for leave for me to stay without telling me. Of course it was very kind; but I think I would rather that he had told me first, for I am not quite sure that I *want* to stay. There was a little note to me from papa, inside the letter to Mr. Wigan, just repeating what Mr. Wigan had told me; but there was nothing from mamma. He said that he wrote for her, because she was not feeling very well, but he didn't tell me whether it

was anything more than a headache; I hope it was not.

I daresay I shall enjoy myself here pretty well during the rest of the time that I stay; but still, as I said, I'm not sure that I would not rather be at home, for though I like Alice, I don't much like either Robert or Richard; and they play so roughly sometimes that I can't bear to have anything to do with them. I liked them a great deal better when I didn't know them so well. Alice doesn't seem to mind it; but I don't know what *I* should do if I had to live always with two such rude big boys; and they don't care a bit more now for being rude to me than to her. They will make us play with them, whether we like or not; and they play so roughly, just as if we were boys like themselves. I used always to think that it would be so nice to have a brother, but I'm sure I don't now, if he was to be like Richard or Robert Wigan—as I suppose he would be, for Alice says that all big boys are disagreeable, and she ought to know, for she sees so many of her brothers' schoolfellows. She says

she would give anything to have sisters instead of brothers; and I am sure if I was her I should say so too.

Friday, August 2d.—I don't know what it is that is the matter with mamma. Papa wrote again to-day, and he still says that she is not very well; but he seems to have written in a great hurry, for it is only five or six lines, and he never says what it is that ails her. I can't think how he could forget.

Mr. Wigan too had a letter from papa, but he didn't read any of it aloud, and only said, when I was wondering what could be the matter with mamma, that papa had also mentioned to him that she wasn't well; and he couldn't tell me anything more. But I don't like staying here when mamma is ill, and after breakfast I told Mrs. Wigan so, and said that, if she would send me, I should very much like to go home; but she won't let me go. She says she wouldn't let me go home in such a sudden way on any account, and that she is sure, as papa has said nothing about my going, that—

Oh! what shall I do? they say—Mr. Wigan says —that mamma is dying!

Saturday, November 24th.—I don't know whether I could make an attempt to tell anything about my dear, dear mother's death; I think I should like to do it if I could, for I care for nothing now so much as to think of her; but I have opened my journal two or three times already, and never have been able yet to write a single line. But to-day, if I can, I want to begin; and now that the winter has come, and everything here at home is so very, very quiet and lonely, I think I should like to write a little again. At least I should like to try; but everything is so dreadfully changed, that I hardly seem to know *what* I should ever like to do now. Oh! it all seems yet so like a dream as I begin to write, and think of that last day when I was writing in the Wigan's drawing-room!

It was that morning, while I was writing, that I first heard how ill she was. They did not mean

to tell me at all—not at all—when she was dying! it was only by overhearing something that Mrs. Wigan was saying that I came to know it. I couldn't help hearing, because I was writing very near to the open window, and Mr. Wigan was sitting on the garden-seat just below it, smoking and reading the newspaper; and while he was there, Mrs. Wigan came to him, and began to talk to him about mamma. I couldn't help hearing every word; though I went on writing for a minute or two at first, not knowing who it was they were speaking of.

"I don't know what to do with that poor child," Mrs. Wigan said first; "it makes my heart ache to see her so unsuspicious: she has no idea that anything serious is the matter."

Mr. Wigan only said: "Poor little thing;" and then neither of them spoke for a few moments, and I went on writing, and hardly thinking at all of what Mrs. Wigan had said, for she is very good to the poor people, and I just supposed, as a matter of course, that she was talking of some poor child in the village. But oh! how they startled and

frightened me when they spoke next. It was Mr. Wigan who began.

"It was very rash and thoughtless of her," he said, "to go day after day nursing that old woman. I am astonished that Rockwood allowed it."

And Mrs. Wigan said:—

"You know every one thought there was no infection at first. She never went after they knew it was typhus."

I did not move, or cry out, or speak. I knew all that they meant; but I felt as if I was all freezing and turning dead; and the room and everything about me went round. I don't think I heard anything for more than a minute: Mrs. Wigan's voice seemed to come presently as voices do when we are half asleep. She was saying:—

"I can't bear to think that that poor child will never see her again. What ought we to do, Robert? They say she's calling for her from morning till night."

I cried out then, and sprang up, and ran from the room, and down the stairs, and, without ever

stopping, into the garden where they were; but when I got to them I could hardly speak—I could only cry to them that I must go home, over and over again, for they wouldn't listen to me, and even tried at first to pretend that they did not know what I meant. And then they said that I must not go, because it would do mamma harm, and because papa had ordered me to stay with them; and at last they even said, because I might catch the fever from mamma, as if I cared for that. But all, all I could say they *wouldn't* let me go. Oh, it was cruel! Mr. Wigan held me so that I could not get away. I struggled with him, but he held me so fast; I burst out sobbing—I couldn't cry, though Mrs. Wigan was crying—but he wouldn't let me go. He sat holding me between his knees, trying to talk to me, and I couldn't interrupt him; I couldn't speak a word,—and he went talking on and on until at last I couldn't breathe, and I had to gasp for air, and then he saw me struggling, and suddenly both he and Mrs. Wigan cried out, and he let me go. But I couldn't run away then,

they had made me so ill; I couldn't even stand—I thought for a few moments that I was going to die. I think I frightened them, for Mr. Wigan caught me up in his arms, and ran with me into the house, and they called for sal-volatile, and made me take some, and then presently I got better.

They were very kind and gentle to me then, and they wanted to persuade me to go to bed, and Mr. Wigan said that if I would he would drive home and see papa, and bring me back word what I was to do; but I couldn't go to bed, I said I must go with him,—and at last, for I know they were too frightened to say much to me again, he said that if I would promise to wait in our meadow until he brought papa to speak to me he would take me; so I promised I would do that, and then we went.

Oh, it seemed so long a drive! I thought it would never come to an end. When we came near home, and had to go slowly up the hill, I could hardly sit still in the chaise; I wanted to get out and run the rest of the way, but Mr.

Wigan wouldn't let me. We came in sight of the house at last, and then to the meadow. I got out at the gate there, while Mr. Wigan went on to the house, and I ran across it to the door into the garden, where Mr. Wigan said that he would bring papa; but I had to wait, oh, so long before he came,—so long, that I almost thought sometimes that Mr. Wigan had broken his promise, and never told him,—that I should have to stay there, and nobody would come near me till mamma was dead.

But papa *did* come at last, he, and Mr. Wigan, and Dr. Scott.

Oh, poor papa! I never shall forget the look he had on his face when he came to meet me. He could hardly speak to me at all; he just took me up in his arms and kissed me, and then called Dr. Scott, and said a word or two that I couldn't hear, and turned away. But Dr. Scott came and spoke to me, and was very kind, though he tried at first to persuade me to go back; and after a minute or two he went again to papa, and said

something to him, and then papa came and took me by the hand, and we all went in together.

But they said that I must only see mamma for a minute,—that I must not stay in the room with her. Dr. Scott said so himself, while papa went away to tell mamma that I was coming; and when I cried out that I *must* stay, that I never would go away from her again, he told me angrily that if I talked like that he would send me back at once to Mr. Wigan's, and then I didn't dare to say another word,—but it was hard of him to speak so to me then. I think he was sorry afterwards, for after a minute, as I was sitting on the garden-steps,—for they wouldn't let me go into the house,—he came and kissed me, and spoke very gently again, and began to tell me how I must not be frightened to see mamma very, very much changed, and he made me promise that I would be very quiet when I went in,—there was little need to make me *promise* that,—and that I would come away when he said that it was time, and I promised even *that;* I knew that if I

had not he wouldn't have let me go to her at all.

It seemed very long until papa came—I don't know if it was—but I heard him coming at last, and I started up; and then he took my hand in his, and just said, "We will go to her now." Dr. Scott came in with us, too, and we all went up together to mamma's room. He went in first alone, and then in a moment he beckoned to us, and we followed him.

Oh! there was no need, indeed, to tell me to be quiet. There came something over me as we went into the room that I never felt in all my life before. I couldn't have spoken at that first moment, I almost think, if it would have saved her life. They took me up to the bedside,—I was clinging to papa's arm,—and mamma put out her hand to me, and her hot hand touched mine that was all shivering and trembling; and I saw her face, and it was so changed that if I had come into a strange room and seen her I don't think I should have known that it was she.

She said, "Katie! Katie!" in a low, low voice,—so softly that I could hardly hear her; but it was her *own* voice,—it was the only thing about her that seemed herself,—and the sound of it made all my fear go away; and I let papa's hand go, and burst out sobbing, and sprang up to her, and she put both her arms about my neck, and I lay and cried, and clung to her. She said "Once more; thank God!" and kissed me, as I lay sobbing, over and over again; and presently, as she held me close to her, before I had spoken once to her,—before I had ever called her by her name, for I *couldn't* speak,—she began to whisper something over me; I could scarcely hear the words, for they were so faint and low; I could only hear that she was praying; until at last she raised her voice, and I heard her say, "O God, be Thou to her what I could never be," and then I felt her arms loosening from me, and I knew that she was giving me up for ever. Oh, I couldn't bear it! I broke into a cry, and clung to her still, and wound my arms round her; and then some-

thing came over me that made everything seem to vanish away, and I remember nothing more till I opened my eyes and found myself lying on the dining-room sofa, with nobody but Hannah and Dr. Scott. And when I prayed to be taken back again, they said that I must not see mamma any more.

Hannah said I was to go to the gardener's cottage, because they would not let me even stay in the house; and presently she took me there, and she and Mrs. Truman made me lie down, and said that I was to try and go to sleep. But I could not sleep, I could not even lie still; when Hannah was gone I got up again, and went away into the garden, and lay down with my face upon the grass under my mother's window.

I don't know how long I lay there, but it must have been for a long time, for when at last I was startled into looking up by a sudden sound I heard, the sun was nearly set. The sound was the opening of a window, and when I looked up I saw that it was mamma's window that they had

thrown wide open. I did not know what it meant at first; I thought because the evening was warm that they had opened it to give her air, and I was glad, because it let me see in; but presently, as I sat looking, I saw the nurse and Hannah moving backwards and forwards in the room, moving as if they were setting it all in order; and I saw them gathering together the things that mamma had used; and then, all at once, everything swam round me, for I knew that it all meant that mamma was dead.

I saw her once more—only once, for they would not let me stay in the house till she was buried, but sent me away with Hannah to Leamington the morning after she died. I could not bear to go, but I promised that if they would let me see her I would go quietly; and so they let me, though Hannah refused at first, and said it would only frighten me; but I went to papa, and papa took me himself.

It did not frighten me; I knew quite well what

she would look like; it didn't frighten me half as much as when I saw her before she died. There was a white sheet laid over her, and papa put it back from her face, and let me see it,—and it looked more like mamma's own face than I thought it ever would have looked again. I wanted to have kissed her, but he would not let me; he said that it was better not. He only let me stand and look at her for a few, few moments, and then he put back the covering over her face, and took me away.

We went to Leamington and took lodgings there, and when the funeral was over, papa came too, and he stayed a few days, and then Hannah went home, and he and I went to Wales—to uncle Robert's. We had talked when they were with us of my going to visit them at Christmas. Oh, how little we knew what would happen before Christmas came! It was a very sad visit; I didn't like it much. I was glad when we came away, for Julia was always wanting me to play, and to run about with her, and I often couldn't,

and then she used to get cross, and say that it was so foolish of me to do nothing but think for ever of mamma, and sometimes she even said that it was wicked; and then we used to quarrel, for I couldn't bear to hear her speak like that. I was glad when we came away, for I wanted the first coming home to be over, and I think poor papa did too.

I was afraid that it would be very dreadful, and yet—though it seems strange how it should be so—I think that first evening when we came home was really the happiest that I have known since mamma died; for I sat all night with papa in his own room, and we talked about her, and we read in the Bible that beautiful chapter which was read over her when she was buried—about the resurrection—and then papa talked to me about it, and made me understand so much of it that I never had thought of before; and he spoke to me about heaven, and about all the joy that there is there, until it scarcely seemed to me as if I could ever grieve any more that mamma was gone away.

Oh, that I could always feel as I felt that night! But I can't: over and over again there come times when I feel as if I don't know how to bear it; as if I would give up everything I have in the world, everything I can think of, only to bring her back to us again. I know it is wrong, and selfish, and wicked to feel like this, and yet I don't know how to help it. Sometimes I think that Julia only said what was quite true when she told me I was wicked because I could not leave off grieving.

I will not write any more now. I have not written all this in one day; but nothing has happened since I began it: we lead such a quiet life now.

Thursday, December 27th.—Papa has just been speaking to me about a thing that I am afraid I shall not like at all. He says that I am to go to school, and not only to a day school, but to be a weekly boarder. I don't want to go; or, if I must go to school, I would so much rather come home every day: but papa won't let it be so. He

says there is no good school near enough, and that, besides, I am a great deal too much alone at home, and that it is not good for me; but I don't know why it shouldn't be, and I'm sure somebody has put it into his head to think that. It is either Hannah or Dr. Scott, I know, and I think it is very hard to be sent away from home just because they take fancies into their heads about me. I'm sure I'm far more likely to "mope myself to death," as Hannah is always talking about, in a great school of strange girls, than I am here. I know it's dull enough at home now, but I don't think the way to make me happier is to send me away.

It is to Mrs. Bakewell's school at Daventry that I am to go. It is ten miles off, and I am to come home by the railway every Saturday afternoon, and to go back on Monday morning.

Tuesday, January, 22d, 1856.—I am to go away to-morrow with papa by the nine o'clock train. Dear papa! he is so very, very good. He has had me in his own room all this evening, and has

been talking so much to me. I half thought before that he didn't care about my going away, but I *know* now that he does. He says that nothing could have made him part with me, except the feeling that a change of this kind was right for me; and he says too, that I cannot know how much he will miss me every hour, and that he will look forward to the coming of Saturday with more eagerness even than I shall do.

I am not going to take my journal to school with me, because papa says he doesn't think I shall have much time for writing there, so whatever I have to say, I must write on Saturdays when I come home.

I am writing this in papa's room, and he has just now looked up from his book, and said that he thinks I had better stop and go to bed, for he wants me to have a good sleep, and get up very strong. So I will go, and I will shut up my journal for a week; for, as we are to go so early in the morning, I am sure I shall not have time to write anything to-morrow.

Tuesday, July 27th, 1857.—"Write anything to-morrow!" I wonder how many "to-morrows" have gone past now without my writing anything! For all these eighteen months I have never once opened my poor old journal. I said I would shut it for a week, and I have shut it for a whole long year and a half.

It is only chance, too, that has made me open it now. Half-an-hour ago, as I was collecting some of my things together for Hannah to pack, I came upon it, lying in a drawer, and I was suddenly seized with a wish at sight of it to write a few words in it once more. I can't attempt to tell all about these eighteen months, of course, for I don't think I have half-an-hour to write; but I should just like to set down the principal things that have happened to me, and especially one thing that is *going* to happen—a dreadful thing that is going to begin to-morrow.

I have been at school at Mrs. Bakewell's all this time, and I like it pretty well now—better than I thought I should at first. I don't like Mrs. Bakewell herself much, but I like some of

the girls very much indeed, and I like the English teacher, Miss Vernon. It is not a very large school; there are only about twenty girls, and only about half of these are boarders. There have been three long holiday times since I first went to school, and they have all been very nice. The first Midsummer holidays were very quiet. Papa and I did not go anywhere from home; but I was happier while they lasted than I had been at any time since dear mamma died. I was very, very sorry when they were over. When the next holidays came, papa took me to London for three weeks, and we stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Norris, and had such a delightful visit; going to all sorts of places, and seeing and hearing all sorts of things. And *this* Midsummer I have been with papa in Wales for a whole month, staying half of the time at uncle Robert's, and wandering about alone with papa during the other half; going to a new place almost every day, and seeing, oh! such beautiful things. I think it has been almost the happiest fortnight that I have ever spent.

And now these holidays have come to an end too, and I am going back to school to-morrow, and —here comes the dreadful announcement at last— I am going as a regular boarder: not to see home again till Christmas.

It was all settled when we were at uncle Robert's. Poor papa has not been well all through the summer, and uncle said as soon as he saw him that he wanted a thorough change, and so he persuaded him to go and travel for several months on the continent, and he is going immediately,—at least, not to the continent immediately, but to see an old friend, Mr. Morton, in Westmoreland, and then to the continent,—to France, and Switzerland, and perhaps to Italy; and we have let our house to a Mr. Whitfield till the middle of December, so that he *can't* come back,—nor I either, which is a far more melancholy thing I think. But it can't be helped, so I must make the best of it. After all it will only be for five months, and five months *must* pass away, even at school.

I think I will take my journal with me. Perhaps I may like to write a little now and then.

Tuesday, December 22d.—They are all past and gone! all the long five months, and I am going home again! Home again! oh, I understand now how the girls are all so wild on breaking-up day. I think if Mrs. Bakewell were to come to us now, and say that we were not to go until to-morrow, I should run out of the house and walk all the way home rather than stay. Everything is in such bustle and confusion. There's the Stauntons' carriage just driven away with Laura, and ten minutes ago little Peggy Wilson came to bid me good-bye, and Catherine Edwards went off two hours ago with her father. There's no father coming for *me*. I thought there would have been, until yesterday; but in the morning there came a note from papa to say he couldn't be back till Thursday, and so I'm going alone.

Oh, about papa, I must just say one word. He has only been for the last three weeks on the continent: three weeks instead of five months! I

never knew such a lazy father. All the rest of the time he was in Westmoreland—never a bit further. I began at last to think that he must have got planted there. I'm going to give him such a scolding when he gets home, for I think it was quite a shame, after everything was arranged for a regular tour,—but he said he got so well at the lakes, that he saw no need for going any further. However he *has* gone a little further: he has got as far as Heidelberg; and he is in Paris now, and is to cross to-morrow night, and be home by Thursday.

I have been writing all this on the top of one of my trunks, and now I can't write another word. Oh, what a noise the girls make! It's almost worth going to school just to take part in breaking-up day. I'm going by the next train. I shall be home in less than two hours.

Tuesday, January 26th, 1858.—It is just five weeks since I wrote last, and this very day they are all going back to Mrs. Bakewell's,—all but me; and I shall never go to school any more. How

strange it is! Two months ago I should have been half wild with joy to have been able to say that; and now I keep thinking of them all assembling there again, and welcoming each other back, and telling each other all the pleasant things that they have done during the holidays, and running about the great house—until I feel quite sad, and the large silent room here looks so lonely and so empty—though the sun is shining brightly enough through the windows for a winter's day—that I could almost be so foolish as to begin to cry. But I never have cried about it yet, and I won't now. I'll write a little bit instead, and perhaps that will be as good for raising my spirits as crying would: at any rate I'll try.

I must go back to the 20th of December. I was to go home that afternoon by the three o'clock train, and by ten minutes to three I was at the station with Miss Vernon, who was kindly seeing me off, and all my luggage. But the train didn't come up till it was a quarter past four, and when it did come they *were in* an immense hurry, and hardly gave us time

to get our luggage in and take our seats, before they were off again. I got into a carriage where there were only a lady and a gentleman, who both seemed very cross, and kept complaining that they shouldn't be in London till an hour and a half after their time.

It was almost quite dark, for it was a very foggy, dull afternoon, and when we stopped at Weedon, the gentleman put his head out at the window and called to know if we were to be given no lamps; but nobody paid any attention to him, and we went off again in a great hurry. But I didn't mind how fast they went, for I was thinking of nothing but of when I should get home, and I lay back very comfortably in one corner of the carriage, looking out through the misty window, wondering how the dear house would look, and if anything would seem changed since I went away, when all at once there came such a strange wild cry. It startled me; it was not the railway whistle—it was like no cry I had ever heard before. The people in my carriage were alarmed too. The lady half sprang up, ex-

claiming, "What's that?" and the gentleman started forward and flung the window open, and put his head out, and then in another instant drew it back, and cried out, "Good God, it's the down train!"

We had no time to think or to speak another word. In one moment more there was a dreadful crash, which broke the carriage in, and threw us all upon each other, and a great weight came down upon us that suddenly seemed to suffocate us; and then I must have fainted; for I remember nothing more till I was awakened by feeling a horrible pain that made me scream out, and I found, when I opened my eyes, that they were dragging me from under the shattered carriages.

They carried me up a little bank to a green field, and laid me down there on the grass; there was nothing else that could be done, for we were near no houses.

I was quite sensible then, and I tried for a few moments to look around me; and I never shall forget the dreadful sight I saw as long as I live. There were a good many more besides me gathered

together there. There was one woman close to me, upon whose head something had fallen, and crushed her whole face: I thought that she was dead until I heard her groan: and there was a man whom they brought after me, who gave such a shriek of agony as they carried him, that I think the sound of it will haunt me all my life.

I was in great pain, too. Something was broken about my right thigh, and all that side and my chest were so bruised and sore that I couldn't move or even breathe without pain. It made me so sick and faint that I hardly knew for a minute together what was going on.

Everybody seemed very kind and very active, and one by one those who had been most hurt were carried away upon panels of the broken carriages to the nearest places where they could be taken care of. There was an inn about half-a-mile from where the accident happened, and most of them were taken there, but I was not. I was carried with one or two others to a gentleman's house that was nearer than the inn. It belonged to a Mr. Curteis, and he had

been in the train with us, but he had not been hurt, and after the accident he was very kind, doing everything that he could to help us; and he came to me and spoke to me, and when he found that I was alone, he said that I should go to his house until some of my friends could come to me. I could hardly speak to him then to thank him; but I never shall forget how kind he was.

So they took me to his house, and I was carried up to a bed, and laid down without my clothes being taken off, and a lady who was very gentle and kind came to me, and sat beside me; but I was so ill then with pain, and so sick and faint, that I could scarcely speak to her, or notice anything that she did.

It seemed as though a very long time passed so; but at last two gentlemen came together into the room, and after saying a word or two kindly enough to me, they began to examine where I was hurt. What they did pained me dreadfully; so much, that two or three times I couldn't keep from screaming out,—but it didn't last long: in a few minutes they stopped, and the lady came to me

again, and said they were going to give me chloroform. I was so glad, for I was in such pain that I hardly knew how to bear it. So they gave the chloroform to me, and then I felt nothing more; but the first thing I saw when I opened my eyes again, was Hannah's dear kind crying face bending over me. I was so glad to see her.

It was a fracture of the thigh that I had. They were not able quite to set it until the second day, and all that time the pain was very bad; but it got much easier when the setting was once over. The bone was broken very close to the joint,—so close that they could not take a firm hold of the upper end of it. If it had been lower down towards the knee, they say that I might have quite got over it: but now it is not possible, and, though the surgeons did all they could, I never shall be able to walk properly again. I only knew this last week: papa told me then.

It was not until the Thursday night that I saw papa—not until very late at night—so late, that I had got afraid he must have been detained upon the

road, and that he wouldn't come. But, when I had all but given him up, he *did* come—and oh, I was so glad to see him! And he was so good to me. I never knew until this illness came that I could be so dear to any body in the world, as I know now that I am to him.

I was at Mr. Curteis's for nearly a month. Both Mr. and Mrs. Curteis were so very kind to me. I had everything done for me exactly as if I had been at home, and they let Hannah stay with me all the time, and papa came every day.

It was on the 15th of this month that I came home. I was still very weak and ill, but I wasn't suffering so much then from my thigh, as from the pain in my chest and side. And it is this that is still much the worst, though it is not always equally bad, and sometimes for a little while goes almost quite away. Dr. Scott is giving me medicines and lotions for it, but they don't seem to make me much better; at least, they have not yet. I wish he could think of something that *would* do me good; it's such a weary pain to be going on so long. He says that

it will be better when I have recovered more from my weakness.

I am beginning to walk a little; but I am very, very lame, and it pains and tires me. I use two crutches now, but they say I shall soon be able to do quite well with one, and even in a few months without any—at least, so Dr. Scott says; but I sometimes think that he promises things just to raise people's spirits, without being quite sure whether they will prove true or not.

And yet I don't know why I should say that, except that I'm out of spirits to-day, and out of temper, too, I think. There are some days when I hardly feel as if I minded all this at all; when it seems as if I could be quite as happy with my lameness as I ever used to be before it came; but then, again, there come other days, and this is one of them, when every thing seems so sad and wearisome, and the hours go past so slowly, and I feel such a longing to go out again and run about the fields and woods in the bright sunshine, and take long walks along the frosty roads, and climb the hills, that I

shall never climb any more; and then it seems that to be shut up here always with my slow steps, as if I had grown into an old woman, will be so hard to bear. I know that I ought not to feel this; I know that I ought to be so grateful to God for having spared my life at all; and I am grateful: for this feeling does not come often, only sometimes when I am alone and in pain; for papa can't be with me always, and when he is long away it *is* very lonely and quiet here. To-day he has been away at Daventry since early morning. I wish he would come back; I am *so* tired.

Saturday, February 20th.—I've been wondering for some time past what is to be done about lessons for me, because, though I suppose I may be done with English (I mean, as far as learning lessons goes), I want very much to go on with German and French, and music—with music particularly—and, as papa has never said anything, I last night spoke to him about it.

But I got very little information from him. He

listened very attentively to what I said, and then looked up at me with an odd look, half grave, half as if he were trying to keep down a smile, and only answered,—

"Yes, you're quite right. I've been thinking about it, Katie."

I waited, supposing he would say something more, but he didn't, and so, after a minute, I asked,—

"Papa, were you thinking of my having a governess?"

He was sitting before the fire, looking into it, with the book he had been reading laid open on his knee, and, without turning round, he said,—

"You wouldn't object to one, would you?"

"No," I said; "only I wanted to ask you, if you knew of any lady, not quite to settle about her coming until I had seen her."

He looked round, and asked, "Why?"

"Because I want to be sure that she is some one I could like before she comes," I said.

But he only laughed, and said,—

"Are you so wise as always to know the people you can like at first sight, Katie?"

I said I didn't think it needed wisdom, and that I *did* know; at least, generally. But I'm afraid he didn't much believe me, for he only smiled and shook his head, and then turned round again and began poking the fire. I thought he wasn't going to say any more; and so, after a few moments, I took up my book and began to read again. But I had not got through half a dozen lines when he interrupted me by saying, rather abruptly,—

"Katie, I'll tell you in a day or two some arrangements that I've been making. I haven't been forgetting you and your lessons, my darling."

And then he got up and came to me, and kissed me, and said it was getting late, and that I had better go to bed. So I went, and ever since I have been wondering what the arrangements are that he is going to tell me.

Tuesday, February 23d.—My own room, half-

past ten, P.M.—He has told me what he meant! He has sat beside me for half an hour, trying to talk to me—trying to explain it all—to tell me how it is right and best; and I remember all that he has said; the very words, the tones of his voice, the way he looked; and yet, now when I have come up here, I feel as if I must be dreaming, as if what he has told me cannot, *cannot* be true.

He has told me that he is going to be married again; he says that I am to have another mother. But she *shall* not be my mother; she never, never shall be! I said so to him, not quite like this, but bursting into tears, and clasping my arms about his neck, trying to move him, to get him to say one word, only one word,—that he would think again—that he would not say it was settled yet—anything: but he would not. He tried to soothe me first, and kissed me, and talked gently about mamma, even with tears in his eyes, as if he loved her yet; and then when I cried still that it was cruel and wrong, for I hardly knew what I was saying, then he grew grave and cold, and

put his arms away from me, and said that he would not permit his daughter to speak in such a way to him. I begged his pardon then, and told him, crying bitterly, that I would say nothing more, and that I knew I had been wrong in saying what I had; and then he took me in his arms again, and said such words to me that I could hardly bear them, feeling, as I still did, such anger and indignation at what he was doing. And yet, if he had continued to be angry, I think *that* would have half broken my heart.

I hardly spoke to him again. He made me lie down, and he sat beside me, and talked to me, about his new wife chiefly; who she was, and where he had met her; oh, I know now why he stayed so long in Westmoreland!—telling me different things about her—telling me at last, and I could scarcely hear it and lie still, that it was partly for *my* sake that he was marrying her, because I needed a mother's care so much. And I didn't answer him; I let him say even that, *though it* made me quiver from head to foot.

He let me go at last. He said that I was weak, and he had startled me, and then he smiled and tried to say something in his usual manner; but I couldn't smile at *him* or answer it. He kissed me again, and I came away here to my room.

I feel all stunned and stupified. I can't write; I cannot even think. I have been sitting here for more than an hour, trying only if I can at least *believe* it, and it seems all yet like a dreadful dream that I *must* awake from.

Oh, my mother, my mother, what am I to do?

I am so sick and faint with pain; my head and my chest are aching so. I can't write, and I am so tired. There is twelve striking on the hall clock. Oh, that I could go to sleep, and wake, and find that it *was* a dream!

Monday, March 8th.—I have not been able to write anything for nearly a fortnight, for I have hardly been out of bed. I made myself ill that night. I couldn't sleep, and in the morning I was so feverish, that papa sent for Dr. Scott, and he

was very angry, and made me stay in bed. But I am much better now; quite as well as I was before.

I have had one talk with papa about his marriage. I began it: I asked him yesterday as he was sitting with me when it would be, and he said, he thought some time next month. And then he came to my side, and talked to me for a long time, very gravely and kindly, and he asked me to promise him, for his sake, that when my stepmother came I would not put myself in opposition to her; and I promised him: and then he asked me, for his sake too, to try and love her. But I burst into tears—I couldn't help it—and I prayed him not to ask this from me yet; and he wasn't angry, but only kissed me, and said very gently, that I would understand all this better some day, and judge him more kindly.

He will go to Westmoreland, and they will be married there. I did not ask him anything more about her yesterday; I haven't courage to talk about her yet. But he told me that first night

that she too had been married before, and that she had two children. I suppose they will come ere with her; but I don't know. I didn't ask how old they were, or whether they were boys or girls. I shall know everything soon enough.

Saturday, April 6th.—I haven't written anything for a month. I feel as if I hardly dared to write,—as if the only way in which I can behave as I ought, is by keeping quite silent, and trying not even to *think* of it all. That is not easy, but I do what I can; I want so much not to vex papa any more. He is so very, very good to me.

I only opened my book now to say, that this morning he told me he was to be married on the 20th. And then they are to go to Belgium for a few weeks. The children will not come here until after they have returned.

Monday, April 15th.—Papa is gone—he went this morning. I cried so when he was going, thinking of what would be before I saw him again; and he

took me on his knees, and talked to me so tenderly, and said so much to me, that I know I didn't deserve, —that I never can deserve to have said of me by any one.

I shall not see him again for more than a month.

Saturday, April 20th. Evening.—It must be all over now. How like a dream it seems to think that he can be married!

I had a little note from him this morning; a dear, kind note, so full of love, that it brought the tears into my eyes to read it. He is very, very good to me; and I have deserved it so little. *She* sent her love to me too—so he said. Her love! as if we could give love to people we have never known.

It has been a very, very quiet day here; I wanted it to be so. But I have been out. I made Thomas draw me in my chair as far as the church, and I got out there, and went to mamma's grave. Hannah would not have let me go, I know, if I had told her; but I begged only to have Thomas

with me, and I got it to be as I wanted. It was quite warm and sunny. I knew it wouldn't harm me to sit a little on the dry grass. I sat there alone for half an hour—there was no one besides me in the churchyard—and I laid my head down on the green mound, and thought of the day she died.

I am so glad this day is over, it has seemed so very long. I wonder what papa is thinking and doing! I wonder if he is thinking, or has ever thought all day of mamma! But it doesn't matter now; it is too late to think, or wish, or do anything now.

Monday, April 22d.—Yesterday there came a few lines from papa, written an hour or two before the marriage, and to-day I had a newspaper, addressed in a hand that I don't know; it looked like a boy's hand. There is an announcement of the marriage there. It says:—

"Yesterday, at Broughton, Westmoreland, by the Rev. Michael Bertie Gervoise, Rector, Frederick

Lister Rockwood, of Leigh-hill, Northamptonshire, to Margaret, eldest daughter of the Rev. Michael Bertie Gervoise, and widow of the late Rev. William Hastings, Curate of Broughton."

I wonder why they always tell who a woman's first husband is, and never say a word about a man's first wife! Margaret Gervoise, Margaret Hastings, Margaret Rockwood: how strange it would feel to know oneself by three different names. I am glad *my* mother's name was not Margaret.

Saturday, May 15th.—I have been very lazy, and not very well, or I suppose I shouldn't have been so long without writing something. But there has been almost nothing to tell, until to-day, when I had a letter from papa, to say that they would be home on the 19th.

Wednesday, May 19th.—I had just begun to write on Saturday, when I was interrupted by Mrs. Hartwell kindly coming to see me, and when she went I didn't feel inclined to go on. It didn't

matter—I don't think there was anything else to tell.

And now I have only opened my book to write a few last words,—to take a sort of good-bye of myself before this new life begins. I am having my last hours of liberty. They are not very gay hours—I almost wish they were quite over, for I am so tired of waiting, and wondering, and fearing. Oh, I wish I knew how it would all be! I wish I knew what she is like; what she will say; how she will behave to me; and, oh! I wish I knew how *I* am to behave to *her!* If it only was not for the feeling that she has taken my mother's place——; but I *can't* get over that, I never think of it, but I rise in rebellion against her.

Half-past five P.M.—The chaise has gone to meet them; they will be here in little more than an hour. The day is beautiful and warm. I have put on a white dress—papa likes to see me in white—and just now I have been round the garden gathering flowers. The drawing-room looks very pretty, with the sun coming in so brightly through the large

windows. I wonder what—Oh no, I'm sick of wondering! I won't wonder any more. I wish I could even stop *thinking* for the next hour.

I have asked God to help me to do what is right; but I am frightened and unhappy. Oh, I wish the first meeting was over!

I won't write any more. I'll go and lie down, and try if I can read until they come. My head has begun to ache so.

Thursday, May 20th.—I have seen her now. They came so suddenly—long before I expected them, and not in the chaise at all. They came by the meadow through the garden, and into the house by the garden-door, and the only warning I had that they were come was, just as they were going up the steps, the sound of a sudden burst of laughter, and in the middle of it papa's voice, saying something that I didn't catch. It was the laughter more than his voice that startled me, though it was only by his voice that I knew it was they, for there was something in it like no

laughter that I had ever heard before. It began with an odd low abrupt sound, like the sort of broken clang that is sometimes struck once or twice before the beginning of a peal of joy-bells; and then, like joy-bells too, the laugh broke out, so clear, and ringing, and musical. It sent the blood all leaping to my heart with such a strange feeling. I wasn't glad that it was so beautiful—I only felt such a sickening jealousy.

They were in the house already: in another minute papa had opened the drawing-room door, and then, in far less than a minute after that, my arms were round his neck.

But I could hardly speak to him, or hear what he was saying, for all my thoughts were so fixed upon my stepmother. She stood by papa's side, and I saw her at last.

She stood without speaking, with her eyes so fixed on my face, that I couldn't dare to give more than one single glance at her: even when papa turned to her she never moved them. He said, smiling, putting me half towards her,—

"Well, Margaret, this is my Katie."

She made no movement either to kiss, or even to shake hands with me: all she did was to say abruptly,—

"And is it Katie's habit in general, to look as white as the white frock she wears?"

"Ah! I'm sorry to say there has been too much of that lately," papa answered; and he looked at me, and put his arm round me so kindly.

"I must teach her better," my stepmother said. "Snowdrops never show their heads when summer comes: don't you know that, living in the country, Kate?"

And then she took both my hands and kissed me, and suddenly looking up to papa—though she had seemed to be speaking quite gravely—broke out again into one of those ringing laughs.

I couldn't answer her; I didn't know what to say; she puzzled and surprised me so. Her sharp keen eyes, as they settled on me, had seemed to be as cold as ice, and yet her voice and her laugh were both like music.

Before I had spoken a word, papa said gaily,—

"But you're not asking us the reason of our coming upon you so suddenly, Katie;" and then at once my stepmother broke in again, exclaiming,—

"The reason is, that his wits had gone woolgathering, Kate, and your chaise has been sent on a goose's errand. Fortunately, however, there's some luggage to be picked up."

"I don't understand," I said to papa. I wanted *him* to tell me, not her.

And then he told me how he had made a mistake in his letter to me about the train they meant to come by, telling me they would take the one that arrived at a quarter-past six, instead of, as they really did, the half-past four one.

"And so we walked from the station here," my stepmother said; "and a very pretty walk it was; particularly when I walked into the pond on the wrong side of the stile."

She said it so queerly—not a bit as if it was anything either disagreeable or unusual—that when papa, as he did, burst out laughing, even I couldn't help

joining a little with him; but I asked no questions, and papa said quickly,—

"That reminds me, Margaret, that your boots must certainly be wet through. Can't you get them off?"

"No doubt I can get them *off*," my stepmother answered briskly; "but what's to become of me when they *are* off?"

"I think I can give you anything you want," I said to her.

"If you can I shall be very glad," she said. "Now then, Frederick, tell me where I'm to go."

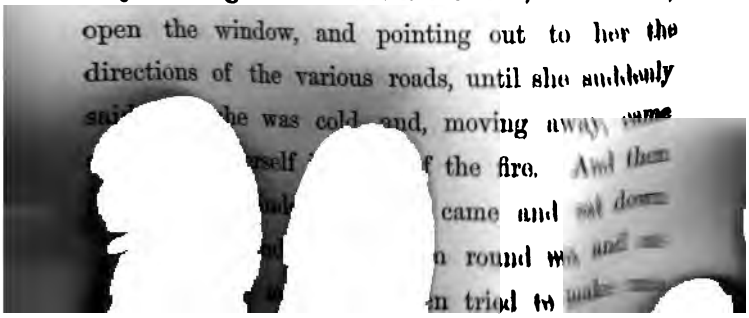
She turned towards the door, and papa went with her up-stairs. I went to my own room, and got shoes and stockings, and sent them up by Hannah, and then I shut my door and sat down alone. But I had not sat so for five minutes when dear papa knocked, and I had to let him in, and to talk to him, or at least to listen while he talked to me, for a quarter of an hour, and then just when he was going away my stepmother came down stairs, and he asked me to go back to the drawing-

room, and, though I would rather have stayed where I was, I could not say so; and so we both went together.

My stepmother was standing at one of the windows, looking out, and as we came in she turned round, exclaiming,—

"After all, Katie, I was nearly tempted to come down in your father's boots, for look here at the damage I'm doing!" and she sat down, and deliberately pulling off her slipper, held it up to me that I might see how she was treading down the heel.

I made some stupid answer about its not being any matter, and then papa went up to her, and they both began to talk about the view, he throwing open the window, and pointing out to her the directions of the various roads, until she suddenly



take a share in what they were saying; but I couldn't talk, except to answer when he spoke to me, and I sat all the time very quiet, just listening to what they said, and looking at her.

She is not young—I'm sure she can't be less than thirty-five, and I daresay she may be older —and she never, I think, can have been pretty. She is about middle height, with a square face, and dark short curls in a thick cluster on each side of her forehead, the longest of them not coming more than half-way down her cheek. They seem to curl naturally, and she wears no combs, but lets them go just as they like, pushing them back when they come into her eyes, without ever seeming to mind how she looks. She is pale and thin, and her dark sharp eyes look as black as jet. She has a strange kind of mouth: when she talks it is soft and pretty, but as soon as she is quiet it looks like something cut in stone.

They talked together till dinner was ready. Papa was in high spirits; such spirits as I haven't seen him in for years. My stepmother talked a

great deal, and very cleverly; I don't think I ever heard a woman talk so cleverly before. She amused papa very much, and often sent him into fits of laughter; but she herself, though she went on talking in the most even, unceasing way, did it always quite quietly and gravely, seldom laughing, except when she came to the end of what she had to say, and then only after she had been silent for a moment or two, as if she was thinking the whole thing over first.

She took little enough notice of me all the time. I daresay she thought it was not worth wasting such clever talk on any but grown-up people. And I'm sure I didn't want her to do it—only I wonder if papa thought that she might have spoken a little more to me! I half fancy he did, for he was so very kind to me himself, as if, I couldn't help thinking, he was trying to make up to me for her coldness. I don't think I wanted much consolation for that.

We did not have dinner till nearly seven, for, not expecting them till half-past six, I had ordered

it so late. My stepmother sat at the top of the table—where no one but papa has sat since mamma died—and she looked as much at home, as though she had presided there for months. It made me angry to see it.

I stole away to my own room after dinner, and did not return to the drawing-room till dusk. When I came back there, my stepmother, I found, was just proposing to have a walk in the garden, before it got dark,—I should not have thought that she would care much for twilight walks,—and in a few minutes she went up-stairs, to undo a carpet-bag, and get some shoes and a shawl, and then papa and she went away together, and I was left alone again.

It was quite dark when they came back. They had walked a good way, they said, and they came and drew chairs round the fire, and then began to talk again, and talked without ceasing till nearly eleven o'clock; when at last, after sitting for half a minute without speaking, my stepmother *abruptly said,—*

"I move that we all go to bed!"

And then, for I suppose she thought papa looked as if he was going to resist, she laughed, and added,—

"Yes, *you* too, for I judge you by myself, and so I'm sure you want a good sleep; and as for Katie, there, she's got a head-ache, and ought to have been in bed two hours ago."

Nobody had told her that I had a head-ache; but I think those sharp eyes of hers see everything.

She kissed me again when I said good-night to her. I did not kiss her. They went up-stairs, and I went into my own room, and I was so tired that I went to bed and fell asleep almost at once.

This morning my stepmother has been going over the house with Hannah, and I have scarcely seen her since breakfast, except half-an-hour ago, when she came in as I was writing, to say she was going out with papa, and then she asked me what I was doing, and when I told her she shook her head and said, "Ah! you would be doing

yourself more good, Katie, if you went and sat out in the sunshine this bright morning; but wait till I come back:" and so she went again. But why she did not tell me to go at once if she wanted it, I can't think; unless she supposes that I can't walk alone.

She said they were to be back to lunch: I'll go and practise till they come.

Half past ten P.M.—*My own room.*—They came back while I was still at the piano, and my step-mother came straight into the drawing-room with her bonnet on, asking,—

"What's that you're playing, Katie? I know the air."

It was one of the airs from Euryanthe. I told her so, making a movement at the same time to rise up, but she said,—

"No, sit still and go on; I want to hear you:" and I had to play to her. I played the air through, and then stopped.

"You can play more difficult music than that, *I suppose,*" she said at the end. She took up a

sonata of Mozart's that was lying on the music-stand, and asked, "Can you play this?"

I said, "Yes," and she told me to play it, and, throwing off her bonnet and shawl as I began, she drew a chair to the side of the piano and sat down. I felt exactly as if I was going to have a music lesson, but I didn't care enough about her to be very nervous, so I got through pretty well.

She quietly said, "Very good," when I had finished, and then began to ask me who had taught me, and what kinds of music I liked best, and if I had had any lessons in singing, and, when I said "No" to this, she said she should like to try my voice, and I was just going to rise up and let her take my place, when in came papa, exclaiming that he was consuming with hunger; at which, breaking out laughing (she had been as grave as a schoolmistress with me), my step-mother said he should be starved no longer, and so the singing lesson was put off, and we all went away to lunch.

"And now, Katie," she said, as we rose from

table, "you are to come into the garden, so get your work, if you have any, and follow me."

Follow her! I opened my eyes wide in amazement, but she evidently meant it, and somehow I hadn't courage to say a word; so I went away in a very subdued state of mind, and got some knitting and a shawl, and, coming back to the dining-room, there I found her waiting for me, with an alarmingly large work-basket in her hand. "Come away," she said, and away we went.

"Now how far can you walk?" she said, when we were fairly out; "can you go to that seat up there?" and she pointed to an armed bench on the edge of the wood.

"Oh, yes," I answered; and so we went, she going on first, and leaving me to follow slowly after her, for there were some wild flowers in the wood which she wanted, she said, and she might as well get them before we sat down. I thought as I went along how strange it was that it should be *she* rather than *I* who went to gather wild flowers.

Well, we got to the bench and sat down, and drew out our work. A very odd piece of work hers looked; as it lay all in a heap of bright colours on her lap, and she just stitching away at one corner of it, I couldn't think what it could be; but she saw me looking at it, and, beginning to laugh, said,—

"I see you don't know what this is. Come, hold one corner, and I'll show you. There," and she spread it out; "is not that an elaborate piece of work?"

It certainly was, and a very pretty one. It was a great patch-work quilt, made of octagonal pieces of bright-coloured silk and satin, all arranged in a regular pattern.

"I'm making it for an old woman at Broughton," she said; and then, setting to work again, she began at once to tell me a long story about this old woman, who she was, and how she had come to know her, and then her whole story,—and a very curious story it was. I was certainly wrong in what I supposed last night, that my step-

mother only cared to talk cleverly to grown-up people, for I am sure if she had had a dozen listeners round her to-day she could not have told this story more drolly than she did only to me alone. If she did it to amuse me, it was very kind of her. It certainly *did* amuse me; what with listening and laughing, I could scarcely get on with my work at all.

"And so Di and I are making her this quilt," she finished by saying.

"And who, I wonder, is Di?" I thought to myself. So I pondered the matter for a moment or two, and then asked her.

"Who is Di?" she answered, looking amazed. "Why, Di is my little girl; did papa never tell you her name?"

"No," I said, "I never asked him." And I couldn't help feeling a little ashamed at that moment that I knew so little about her children.

"Di is rather an odd name," I said; not quite knowing what else to say.

"It means Diana, you know," my stepmother

said. "Yes, it is rather uncommon, but it's a family name. And my boy, too, has a family name also," she added after a moment,—"Bertie."

"Whether is he or Diana the eldest?" I asked.

"Oh, he is, a great deal," she said; "Di is quite a little thing. Let me see; Di will be only eight in November, and Bertie was thirteen last August."

"Thirteen!" I echoed in dismay.

My stepmother looked surprised, and exclaimed,—

"Why, what of that, Katie?" and I had to begin some confused answer about not thinking he had been so old; but I was so taken aback, so perfectly confounded at the idea of a great boy of nearly fourteen coming to live in our house, that I hardly knew what I said.

My stepmother seemed immensely amused; for, after staring at me for a moment, she fairly laid down her work without saying a word, and broke into a peal of laughter.

"My dear Katie, what *is* the matter?" she said, as soon as she could speak.

I might have told her if she had not laughed at me, but I could not then. I felt so angry both with myself and with her that, instead of explaining what I meant, I only said crossly that nothing was the matter, and went on knitting very fast. But I felt that she was looking at me again, and somehow, do what I would, the thought of her bright hard eyes fixed upon me made me so uncomfortable and so hot, that I raised my head, half in defiance at last, and looked at her.

But, I don't know exactly how it was, there was something in her face that I had not expected to see; she was neither laughing nor looking angry, but so grave, and almost kind and gentle, that all my defiance took a sort of precipitate flight before her, and I bent my head down again over my knitting, feeling that I was flushing all over with something that was more like shame than anger.

She only said, in the quietest and most ordinary tone in the world,—

"Gather up your shawl, Katie, it isn't warm

enough to-day to sit out-of-doors without something on;" and then, turning round to her work, in another minute she was talking about her children again as if there had been no interruption. It was kind of her, and I didn't deserve it, I was so ill-tempered. Oh, how is it that I get ill-tempered so often now compared with what I used to do? Ever since I have been ill, the least thing seems to fret me; it makes me so miserable sometimes to think how changed I am, that I don't know what to do. All to-day, now, since my stepmother was talking to me, I have been fretting about the coming of that boy Bertie, till I can't get him out of my head. For I had no idea that he was anything but a child, and I don't know *how* I am to bear a great rough boy in the house. I have had such a horror of boys ever since I was at the Wigans'—that time before mamma died—and if I could scarcely bear how Alice's brothers teazed me then, when I was quite well and strong, I wonder how I am to bear anything like it now? And Alice, too, was well off compared with what

I shall be, for her brothers were at a boarding-school fifty miles off, and only came home twice a year, and Bertie, it seems—so my stepmother says—is not to go to school at all, but is just to be sent every day to our clergyman, Mr. Hartwell! so that, except for a few hours every morning, he will be here continually. I can't think how papa can have consented to such an arrangement. But, indeed, I needn't talk about *papa* consenting, for I know it is all my stepmother's doing; she just arranges whatever she pleases.

It is getting so late; I must make haste to say a few words about the rest of the day, and then go to bed.

It was a quiet enough afternoon and evening. My stepmother was writing letters after dinner, papa was in his own room, and I was reading. After tea my stepmother went to the piano and sang.

She sings very beautifully,—I almost think more beautifully than any woman I ever heard, except in public. She quite startled me; she brought the tears to my eyes again and again; since I

was in London a year and a half ago, I have never heard anything like it. As she sang, I felt for the first time something that was almost *more* than admiration for her. It has passed away,—it has quite gone now; but still, when I remember how she sang those songs,—not as if she was singing for effect at all, but so much as if it all came from her heart,—I hardly know what to think of her.

She sang a great deal; she never seemed to get tired; she sang till it was quite dark. Papa was sitting near her all the time; we did not get any lights, and as the room got slowly dark she began to sing some quiet, beautiful, sacred music. "We have had no Schuberts to-night," papa said at last. I think she had been going to rise when he spoke, but she answered, "No;" and sat bending over the piano for a few moments, and then, without a word, began to sing another song. It was a little solemn dirge of Schubert's (I have heard other people sing it before), called "Requiescant in pace." I can't speak of how she

sang it, it was too beautiful to write about. It was the last thing she sang. When it was ended she quietly rose up, and, just saying, "I suppose it's getting late," shut down the piano.

And now the second day with my stepmother is over, and I feel all confused and uncertain, and as if I was sure only of *one* thing,—that my own dear mother is almost dearer to me than ever. My own beautiful mother! Ah, my stepmother may be as accomplished and as clever as she likes, but she has not got my mother's beauty, and I would fifty times rather be beautiful like—— Oh, I don't know what I'm saying!—how can I tell? It must be very, *very* nice to be as clever as my stepmother.

Monday, May 31*st.*—I haven't had an opportunity of writing for a good many days. I say an *opportunity*, because I suspect my stepmother does not very much approve of journal writing, and so I feel rather shy of bringing out my book before her. *But she and* papa are away walking just now.

She has been making arrangements for giving me regular lessons, for she is going to teach me everything herself. I don't know how I shall like it. I have been undergoing an examination in all kinds of things for these two last days, and I feel now as if my stepmother knew every atom of information that I possess in the world. It is not very pleasant. I know I have never felt so insignificant in my life as I have done during these two days. But she has been nice enough about it, certainly,—I mean she has been kind and gentle, never even laughing at me when I didn't know anything, except when I have begun to laugh first, and, whenever it was possible, giving me little bits of praise and encouragements; so that on the whole, it really has not been so disagreeable as one might have expected.

But in other respects I hardly know how we are getting on. My stepmother is *very* sweet-tempered; nothing ever alters her or puts her out for a moment, but she makes every one in the house obey her as if there was not a will in it except her own. She goes about *arranging*, and deciding, and altering;—

she is altering all kinds of things,—never consulting with anybody, not even with papa; never hesitating about anything she wants done, or changing her mind; but in the quietest and most decisive way giving her orders, and then, if any difficulties are raised—and Hannah is very fond of raising difficulties—laughing down all opposition with such provoking good humour, that it's impossible to say another word. And so everything she wants is done, and we might just as well, I do believe, be so many automatons, for any will we are allowed to have of our own.

I hardly know how to take it all. Sometimes I fret and get cross about it,—and then again it seems so foolish to do that, for, when I come to try and put it into words, I really hardly know what I have to complain of; for my stepmother is far kinder to me than I ever thought once that she would be, and I often feel, when I have been cross, and obstinate, and irritable, that I don't deserve her to do one half of what she does for me. *She* is always the same, no matter how I behave to her; she never yet has said an angry word to me: whatever I say or do she is

always sweet-tempered and kind. And I *am* grateful to her; there are moments when I almost feel as if I could love her; only I don't know if she would care about my love.

Oh, I wish I was wise or good! I wish I knew what I ought to do!

Wednesday, June 2d.—Evening.—Papa and my stepmother are dining at the Comptons', and I have been alone since six o'clock. My stepmother asked when she went away if they should see me again when they returned, and papa answered, "Oh yes, I hope so; we shall not be late:" so I shall not go to bed until they come.

It is the first evening I have been alone since my stepmother came. How soon one gets accustomed to things! She has just been here one fortnight, and yet the house seems strange to-night without her. The evening has seemed so long and dull. She *does* make everything cheerful when she is here; it is hardly possible, whether one really likes her or not, not to miss her when she goes away, even for a little while.

I have had a good deal to do with her during these few last days,—I mean she has talked to me, and we have been together a good deal.

Last night I was alone with her for some time. I had been left in the drawing-room by myself for a little while after tea, and when it began to get dark I had brought a stool to one side of the fire,—for, though it is June, it was so cold and wet yesterday that we had a fire all day,—and was sitting there looking into it when my stepmother came in. The door, I suppose, had not been quite closed, and she came in very noiselessly, so that I didn't see her until she was quite close to me. She laughed as I started then, and asked good humouredly,—

"Have I interrupted a reverie, Katie?"

She wheeled an arm-chair to the front of the fire and sat down, bending forwards and stretching out her hands to warm them. I sat on my stool and looked at her. I like to watch her when she moves her hands; they are so beautiful.

She turned to me presently, and said with a *smile*,—

"You are fond of fire-gazing, are you not, Katie?"

"I used to be," I answered; "I don't know that I care for it now."

"When did you care for it more?" she asked.

"Oh, long ago; when I was quite a child," I said,—and suddenly such a vision rose before me of those old days when my own mother used to sit where my stepmother was sitting now, and we talked together, looking into the fire in the long winter nights. I was afraid that she might ask me something more about that time, and I added quickly, "I've almost left off doing it lately, since I've been to school. There was no time for it there."

"And how with this last winter at home, Katie?" she said.

She spoke very gently—I remembered it afterwards—but I had got annoyed at her going on questioning me, and about this last winter too, in particular, when so many of my fire-gazings had been all taken up with such bitter thoughts about papa's marriage. I didn't know what she could mean by making me think of them, and I began quickly and impatiently—

"Oh, this last winter"—

And then suddenly broke off, not quite knowing how to end the sentence, and instead of saying any more I bent my head down and rested it on my knees, clasping my hands round them. I hoped she would let me alone then, but to my surprise I hadn't sat more than a few moments so, when she put her hand upon my head, and said in her gentlest voice,—

"It was a weary time, Katie. I know it must have been, dear child. To be alone when one is ill, is sad for any one—saddest of all for those who are young."

I couldn't have looked up without shaking off her hand, and, I hardly know why, I didn't want to do that. It lay upon my head with such a soft, warm, gentle pressure; as it touched me first it had even sent a kind of thrill through me. It was partly, I think, because at the very moment when it came I had been misunderstanding and growing angry with her, and it made me feel humbled and sorry that I deserved any kindness so little. So, without looking up, I only said,—

"Oh, I wasn't meaning that; I wasn't thinking of my illness."

I don't know if she guessed what I *was* thinking of; I half think she did, because she didn't ask me; but she said nothing at all, and she didn't move her hand at once, but let it stay a moment longer, and then smoothed it softly over my hair before she took it away. And it was only after she had done that that she spoke again.

"It is wise and right not to think of it too much," she said; "we often make misfortunes appear greater than they are by dwelling on them. Have you ever felt that, Katie?"

I *had* felt it often about my lameness, and I said, "Yes;" but not anything more, for I don't talk much to her, and besides, at this moment, I was wondering what she meant by a look which, as she spoke the last words, she had given me—an odd, quick kind of look.

"Events often come, too, in the shape of evils," she said, after a moment's silence, "which, after years have passed, we look back upon, and feel

to have been almost, or altogether, blessings." She turned to me again. "That knowledge will come to you too, Katie, some day, perhaps," she said.

I didn't know; I couldn't say "Yes" to that yet. I sat thinking of the evil that for months past had seemed greater to me than my lameness, and wondering if *it* would ever come, as she had said, to seem as if it was a blessing.

When she spoke again, a minute or two after this, it was to ask me something about my illness, which I answered; and then, by asking me one question after another, she led me on so that I couldn't help talking a good deal, and telling her about the accident, and about all that was done afterwards. I had never talked to her so much before.

She was very kind and gentle. I did not think I could have minded answering her questions so little. When I had finished telling her all that she could care to know, she suddenly, after a few moments' silence, said, "Poor child!" in such a sweet, half-whispered, compassionate tone; and *when I looked* up at her, I found her turned to

me with quite a pitying soft look in her eyes. It was like the look she had given me the first day in the wood, only more gentle still, and not so grave. Somehow the sight of it brought the colour to my cheeks.

"I don't mind it always,—sometimes hardly at all;" I said quickly. I didn't want her to think that I was calling for compassion from her.

"No, I understand," she said very quietly; and then almost immediately she began to tell me about a sister she had once had, a good deal older than herself, who had been crippled by a fall when she was a child, and had lived all her life so deformed and lame that she never had been able to put her foot to the ground from the day she fell. And she had suffered so much, too—suffered almost constantly for five-and-twenty years—and then she died.

"Invalid as she was, she had been almost a mother to the rest of us," my stepmother said. "Her death was the greatest sorrow,—except one,—that I have ever known."

There was not a change or a falter in her voice, and she never moved her eyes from where they had all the time been resting—on the fire; so steadily and calmly she spoke, and yet in some way she made me *feel* how great her sorrow had been. I bent my head down; it almost seemed as if I had no right to be looking at her then.

She sat quite still for a minute or more, and then, rather suddenly, turned round and said,—

"Yet, merely to speak of it, your accident would seem to have been so much the greatest, Katie. It might have been even worse with you than it was with her."

"Oh, yes; I know it might," I answered quickly.

I might have said how grateful I was to God that he had made my accident so light; but I could not do it. I don't know whether it is right or wrong, but I can so very, very seldom speak in that way of what I feel. So I said nothing more, and after a minute's silence, my step-mother looked at her watch, and, exclaiming, "Do you know it's past ten o'clock?" rose up and rang

the bell, and we had lights brought, and no more talking. But I have thought a good many times to-day of how gentle she was last night.

Friday, June 4th.—There is an odd feeling coming over me, as if we had all been living in the dark, and my stepmother had come and opened the window shutters; or as if we had been asleep, and she had wakened us. Whether it is changed for better or worse, the house certainly isn't like the same place since she came.

I don't know if I like the change; and yet something happened yesterday that made me speak as if I did, and that made me stand up for *her* as if I cared for her.

I had had my lessons in the morning with her, and then she had gone out, and left me to do some German translation alone. It was a dull, heavy day, and I had got a headache, and the translation was difficult, and it worried me, and I couldn't get on with it. I know she wouldn't have minded, as I wasn't well, if I had put it away; but I didn't

want to do that, so I went puzzling on at it for more than an hour, till I got so stupid, and my head ached so that I was hardly fit for anything. And at last I was sitting with my elbows on the table, holding my head with my hands, when Hannah came into the room and saw me.

"What ails you, dearie?" she asked, as soon as she caught sight of me; and she came up to where I was sitting, and put her arm round me.

"Oh, I'm only tired and stupid, Hannah," I said.

And the next moment I was so sorry I had said anything of the sort, for she broke out at once—

"And no wonder you're tired, poring over them books as you do! It's easy to know who sets you at it, and who it is that'll work you into a fever one of these days, my poor lammie! I wish she was further! It's little peace or quiet there's been in the house for any of us since she came into it."

I knew Hannah didn't like her; I had had a vague kind of dread for more than a week that she would begin to complain to me some day about

her; and now she *had* begun, and I didn't know what I ought to say to her.

"Oh, hush, Hannah!" I said softly; but she had got her arm round me, and was pressing my head to her, and stroking my hair; and I couldn't send her away from me, or keep her from talking.

"There's not a stitch 'll be the same in the house in a month's time," she went on; "it's just worry worry, change change, from morning to night. And she's none so fond of any of us, Katie, I see that sharp enough. Ah, it 'll be a hard time for you, lammie, when she gets her own children into the house!"

"Hannah, you mustn't say that, it isn't right; it isn't true!" I called out then. "You can't say she isn't kind to me; whether she likes me or not, she *is* kind."

"And what call has she to pretend to like you if she doesn't do it?" Hannah broke out. "I'd rather see folks in their own colours than painted all the colours of the rainbow. Ah, dearie, don't

you trust to her kindness; it's queer kindness you'll ever get from the like of her."

I pushed away my chair from the table, so that Hannah had to let me go, and I got up. I couldn't bear to hear her talking so, whether it was true or not; and it wasn't true; she oughtn't to say it to me. So I got up and told her that, but, I don't know what ailed me, I couldn't speak steadily,—my voice all shook.

And the worst was that she wouldn't believe I was saying what I thought; she would go on talking as if she knew that I really quite went along with her, and that I only wanted her not to speak about it because I thought it wasn't safe.

"Well, hush, dearie, don't be frightened; master's in his study, and there's nobody to hear," she said. "Not that I'd care for myself if all the world was to hear, but I'll not bring *you* into trouble. And she shan't hear *me* say anything either. She'd be glad enough of an excuse to send me away, but I'll not give her it; she shan't take me away from my little lamb that's had me with

her all her life; so we'll let alone, and hold our tongues a bit longer, and keep up our hearts; won't we, Katie?"

She has been so kind to me all my life, and I know she loves me, and I love her; but I couldn't bear, I *couldn't bear* to hear her speak like this.

"Hannah, you don't know what you are saying," I cried out. "I'll never listen to you again if you speak such things. I like my stepmother! I would love her if she would let me; she's better and cleverer than we all are together." And then I couldn't get any farther; I don't know what was the matter with me; I laid my head down on the table, and burst out crying.

She didn't say another word to vex me. Poor Hannah! she was so good to me; she began reproaching herself so for having worried me, and saying such loving things to me, that I had to kiss her over and over again, and tell her that I wouldn't mind it, before she would go away, and even when I thought she was gone she came back two or three times, just to see that I wasn't crying again, she

said, and to exclaim that she wished she had bit her tongue out before she had said a word to vex me. I had to tell her again and again that I wasn't angry, or I don't think she would have left me at all.

I set to my work again when she really was gone. My head was aching more than ever, but I was afraid my stepmother would ask me questions, and guess that something had happened if she found me lying down, so I tried to do a little more of my translation till she came home.

She came before I had finished it; she came into the room looking so bright and cheerful, and exclaiming, "Still at your German, Katie?" she walked up to where I was sitting, and standing behind me leant down over my shoulder.

"I can't get it right," I said; "I can't make some of the sentences go, all I can do."

"Let me see it," she said; and she began as she stood to read what I had done.

She had laid one of her hands on my shoulder; as she bent over me I don't know what it was that made me suddenly wish so that she would stoop lower

and kiss me. I made a movement so that my cheek might touch her dress; I wanted to be near to her.

She began to talk about my translation. I am afraid I didn't get much good of what she said, and I suppose she presently saw that, for she stopped speaking, and looking into my face said,—

"You're tired, Kate; we will set the rest right to-morrow. Shut up your books now." And she stood up and took her hand from my shoulder.

She would have gone away in another moment; I knew that, and I don't know what kept me from letting her go, but I turned round, and suddenly said, "I tried to finish it; I am so sorry it isn't finished;" and I stretched up my arm,—up to her shoulder, up to her neck, and round her neck, and made her bend her face down.

"You tried too hard, Katie," she said gently; and then with a smile she put her lips to mine, and kissed me. It was not a voluntary kiss; I knew that I made her give it to me; but yet she gave it softly, and she put her hand for a moment on my head, and smoothed my hair.

I was glad when she had kissed me; I know I was; but I don't know whether I am glad or sorry now. Last night it seemed to me as if in making her do it I had done something to separate me from mamma, and I lay in bed and cried about it; to-day I can't tell whether I did what was right or wrong. It was the way Hannah spoke that made me do it, and that made me feel to my stepmother as I did. I don't know how I feel to-day. I know that all Hannah said yesterday was wrong; but I don't know if I would say what I did again.

Saturday, June 5th.—The last great change in our life is to begin on Monday, with the arrival of my stepmother's children. I would give a great deal that the boy was not coming; I do so shrink from the thought of having him here.

I suppose my stepmother is glad that she will see them so soon, but it is not very easy to tell. She is not like other people. When she speaks of them, she always seems to me to talk of them

more as if they were merely somebody else's children that she took an interest in than her own. I mean she doesn't talk, as most mothers seem to do, only of what is good in them; but she brings forward their faults, and weighs them against their good qualities, in such a quiet, sensible, clear-seeing kind of way. I wonder if she *is* very fond of them! I've got an odd kind of curiosity to know. I want so much to see how she will behave to them when they come.

She has been talking a good deal to me about them during the last day or two, especially about the little girl, because I have asked most questions about her, I suppose; and from what she says I think I shall like her. As for the boy I can't at all get a clear idea of him; I can't understand some of the things she occasionally says about him; but I shall see him soon enough now, so I needn't trouble myself much.

Tuesday, June 8th.—I have got the drawing-room to myself for a little, so, until some one comes and

interrupts me, I'll write a little about these new relations of mine. They came yesterday by the train that reaches Blisworth a little before one. Both papa and my stepmother went to meet them, and before two they were all here.

I had been watching at one of the windows of my room for them, and when I heard the wheels of the chaise I went out into the hall to be ready to receive them, for I supposed that was what I ought to do. They were at the open door a moment or two afterwards, and I saw them: that is, I saw a little girl in a broad straw hat, with her face turned away, and a boy, whom I was very nearly going to call little too, who sat very bolt upright opposite papa, staring with great earnestness and gravity at the opened door and at me. And, indeed, I stared at him too, for I could hardly believe that *that* was Bertie, that little, thin, slight, delicate-looking creature; but, before I had got over my surprise, my *doubts* at least about its being he were quite set at rest, for papa called out, "Now, Bertie, *my boy*, step you out first;" and out accordingly

the boy stepped, and not only *out*, but to my amazement, up the stairs to where I stood, and quite close up to me, when, in the coolest and most composed way in the world, he stretched out his hand and asked me, "How do you do, sister Kate?" in such an odd, quick, grave tone, that it was all I could do to answer him without laughing.

I had a vague feeling that if he had been allowed he would have gone on at once to say something more; but, fortunately, no time was given him, for my stepmother and Di were close behind him, and in another moment my stepmother's clear voice was exclaiming,—

"Well, Katie, here are our young people at last! Come, Di, look up, and speak to sister Kate."

At which the broad hat did raise itself, and I saw a bright little fair face underneath, with thick gold curls falling prettily round it. I liked the look of it rather, and so I stooped down and kissed it, and said I was glad to see her, and then we all went into the drawing-room together.

Arrivals nearly always seem to me awkward things,

particularly when new people are introduced to one another; but my stepmother would make anything go off well. She talked now in the merriest way for ten minutes, papa joining her, and Di saying a little, for she doesn't seem at all a shy child, and Bertie, from a post he had taken up at one of the windows, occasionally coming in with a sudden remark; until at last she said she would carry Di off to her room, and told Bertie to come too, and she would show him his, and so they all three went, and in a minute or two papa also went, and I was left alone.

But I was not alone long. Before ten minutes had passed the door opened again, and to my dismay in came Bertie alone, and without the least hesitation walked straight up to the window near which I was sitting.

"I wasn't sure which was the door of the drawing-room," he said; "one always makes mistakes at first in a strange house."

I answered, "Yes;" and then, after a moment's silence, I blurted out, "I'm afraid—I mean, I think,

that papa has gone away to his own room;" for indeed I felt quite nervous at the boy's coming in in that way, when I hadn't a word in the world to say to him; but he very coolly answered, "Has he?" as if that announcement had no concern whatever for him, and then the next instant, as though *this* interested him far more, he was asking me,—

"How far belongs to you? Are those fields over there yours?"

"No," I said, "only the first meadow, and on that side—you can see it from the other window—we have as far as the wood."

But he didn't go to the other window, he stood still, and asked,—

"How much ground have you then altogether?"

"Oh, very little," I said. "Only about ten acres. Should you like to go to the garden?" I asked, with a sudden ray of hope.

"Thank you; I'll go presently," he said carelessly. "Mamma's coming down."

I'm sure I was delighted to hear it! I began

with tolerable politeness to ask him a few questions about their journey, and, taking a seat opposite me, he answered me with great propriety and gravity, remarking upon the great speed in travelling now-a-days, and the convenience of railways, and so on, with a sedate, grown-up tone and manner, that made such a strange contrast with his little pale keen face, that I really didn't know what to make of him.

I was beginning to think that, though he certainly was not much like what I had expected him to be, he was very nearly as disagreeable in another way, when to my great delight I heard my step-mother's voice upon the stairs, and immediately after she and Di came merrily in together, and then suddenly Bertie, darting up from his seat before me, sprang into the middle of the room, and, in a voice so different from that in which he had been speaking to me, that I stared at him in bewilderment, impetuously exclaiming, "Give me a kiss, Di!" he caught the child half up in his arms, and carried her off to the south window,

and there, with his arm round her, and his head bent down upon her shoulder, began to talk the most childish and caressing nonsense to her, letting her hang about him, and play with him, and laugh at him, as if he had never in his life had a serious word on his lips.

I just sat still and fairly stared at him. I never saw such a transformation in anybody before. I was given a good while to stare, too, for my step-mother, after saying that she thought it would be nice to go out for a little before dinner, went away again to see if papa would come, and then neither Bertie nor Di took any further notice of me, and I had nothing to do but to watch them for the next ten minutes. On the whole they made rather a pretty thing to watch. I couldn't help thinking that it must be nice for Di to have a brother so fond of her as Bertie seems; though he isn't the *kind* of brother that I should much like, I think.

He sat playing with Di till suddenly papa's voice from the hall called him, and, springing up,

he, and Di at his heels, ran out of the room together. He was not gone long, however. In two or three minutes he came back again alone, and advanced up to me.—

"Sister Kate," he said quickly, "will you get ready to go out?"

"No," I said, "I'm not going out."

He seemed quite unprepared for that announcement, and stood still as if suddenly arrested in his progress by it, and rather taken aback; but the next moment he recovered himself, and advanced again.

"But they said you were," he very gravely remonstrated.

"I can't help it, I'm *not;*" I answered rather crossly. I wanted him to leave me alone.

He looked at me for a moment in a perplexed and speculative way, as if I was some sort of natural curiosity that he didn't quite know how to manage; then suddenly, with an odd kind of eagerness, as though all at once struck with the idea that the best thing to do was to bring me to the point at once, he bluntly exclaimed,—

"Kate, why not?"

"Because I never go for long walks," I said quickly. "Don't you see that I *can't* walk like other people?"

For a moment there came the first look of hesitation into his face that I had seen.

"Oh, yes," he said, in a grave, subdued tone; "oh yes; I'm very sorry!"

And then, without another word, he slowly turned round and went away, leaving me, though I was half cross, almost laughing.

But, after all, I *did* go out. Papa and my step-mother both came, and said that they must have me with them, because, they told me, I need not go farther than I liked, but could sit down as soon as I was tired, while they went on; and they were so kind that I didn't like to say no any more, and so the end of it was that we all went out together.

We went down by the river, and then they went up the hill, through the wood, and I waited for them, sitting by the river-side till they came back.

But a foolish little thing happened before they left me. As papa was looking about for a seat for me, my stepmother suddenly exclaimed,—

"I don't think we ought to leave Katie here alone; one of us will stay with her."

"Oh, no!" I said eagerly; but in the same instant to my dismay Bertie cried out,—

"I'll stay!"

"No, no!" I exclaimed, with double vehemence then, "I don't want any one—I want to be alone —I won't have any one stay with me."

Papa and my stepmother both began to laugh, and papa said,—

"Why, Katie, is this the way you reject gentlemen's attentions?"

"Papa, don't you see that it's absurd?" I answered. "What would be the use of Bertie coming out at all if he's just to sit here with me? You know you are taking this walk on purpose for him."

But papa only laughed again, saying he found no fault with my *reasoning*, it was only the *manner* of

my refusal that had struck him as being original; and then he turned round to Bertie with some joking remark about his not being prepared for finding me such a determined character, which Bertie heard with immovable gravity, and made no response to of any kind.

I was a little vexed, but I didn't know how I could make the matter better, so I let them go without saying anything more. I think they were away about an hour; then I heard their voices again sounding very merrily in the wood, and in a few minutes they came up to me,—first my stepmother and Di, laden with flowers—for Di is a great gatherer of wild flowers, she tells me—then papa and Bertie. They had had a charming walk, they said, and as we went home they were all very gay: but Bertie didn't talk any more to me.

When dinner was over Bertie and Di were out again in the garden, and for a long time I heard them playing there together. My stepmother asked me if I wouldn't go too; but I didn't want to go,—I don't like being with strange children. They came in-

doors to tea; then after tea, when it began to get dark, my stepmother went to the piano and sang, and, while Di played in whispers on papa's knee, Bertie went and stationed himself on a stool close to his mother's side, and sat there looking into her face with such an odd attentive earnestness, the whole time she sang.

"And now, my little Di, I am going to carry you off to bed," my stepmother said at last; and though Di showed not a sign of being either tired or sleepy, and was in the very midst of a highly interesting experiment as to how plaited hair would become papa's face, no sooner had her mother spoken than she started off his knee, and, without the least shadow of unwillingness to go in her face, began to say good night to us. She kissed papa first, laughing very gleefully at the absurd appearance he made with his hair in the half finished plaits; then came to me rather quietly and demurely, and held up her face; and then, turning round, made a spring into Bertie's arms, and stayed there till another call from my stepmother at the door—"Come away, Di!"—sent her skipping after her.

Papa and Bertie talked till my stepmother came back. It was not particularly amusing talk, being all about Greek and Latin, and Mathematics, and other things that Bertie had been doing at school; but I rather liked to listen to it. I suppose Bertie is a clever boy, at least, he seemed to talk about these things with more sense than boys often do, and certainly with more gravity. He was as sedate as papa himself, and asked questions and made remarks with such solemnity and self-possession, that I could do nothing but sit and stare at him.

He remained rather solemn too for the rest of the evening. At supper, as we sat round the table, he planted himself opposite papa and my stepmother, and sat there extremely upright, turning his head from one to the other, and listening to every word they spoke, though without almost opening his own lips, with such an odd, keen, greyhound kind of look on his little thin face. I think he would have sat so, wide awake, all night if they had let him; but rather to my relief, when eleven o'clock struck, my stepmother said quietly—

"My dear boy, light your candle, it's quite time for you to be in bed;" and then, exactly in the same unhesitating way that Di had done before, up he rose at once, and shook hands with us, and took his departure. And then, in five minutes, I went too.

This morning I have scarcely——

I was interrupted just as I was beginning that sentence by a little thing happening which I am rather sorry for—at least, it might have been as well if it hadn't happened. Di suddenly burst into the room, expecting to find her mother I suppose, for as soon as she saw that no one was here but me she stopped with an abrupt—"Oh! I wanted mamma."

"She's somewhere upstairs," I said.

"Then, you'll do this, please, will you?" she asked, after a moment's consideration, and she came up to me holding the two strings of her bonnet apart, to show that they wanted tying. So I tied them for her.

"And now give me a kiss," I said.

As I stooped down to kiss her my hair fell forward, and she put up her hand and caught some of the curls, and cried out laughing,—

"It's just the same colour as Bertie's."

"What, my hair?" I said rather sharply, and drawing back. "It isn't! it's a full shade lighter."

She didn't say anything, but stood for a moment, still twisting her fingers into the curls; then suddenly she looked up again to me, and, with a bright gleam coming into her face, she burst out—

"*Isn't* Bertie a nice boy?"

"I—I'm sure I don't know!" I answered rather confusedly; not at all prepared to reply to such a question. The blue eyes opened wider as I spoke.

"Why? Don't you like him?" she said quickly.

I wasn't a bit inclined to be forced into politeness, and I answered bluntly enough—

"No, not much."

Her eyes grew to double their right size with amazement.

"Why not?" she exclaimed.

"Oh, I don't know—I don't like boys," I answered

impatiently, and I thought her next step then would be to break out into some loud expressions of indignation; but it was nothing of the sort: to my surprise the only thing she did was, with one great stare of blank amazement into my face, suddenly to dart from my side and out of the room, and away by the hall door into the garden. I couldn't imagine for a moment what she could mean, but I very soon found out, for in a few seconds I heard her voice shouting out, "Bertie!"—and looking through the window there I saw Bertie within a few yards of it, busily engaged in examining something or other upon the ground, and Di, who had no doubt caught sight of him before she left me, springing across the grass to join him.

"Bertie!" she cried.

"Well, Di," he said.

The window was open, and he was so near it, that if they had been in the room I could scarcely have heard more plainly what they said.

"Bertie,"—in a tone of unspeakable amazement,—"Katie says she doesn't like boys!"

"I can't help it, Di," was all his answer, in a tone of great indifference.

"But, Bertie," she cried again, "she says she doesn't like *you!*"

"Well, Di," he said coolly, and he went on with what he was doing all the time; "well, Di, I could pretty well have told you *that* before."

"And, Bertie,"—Di's perplexity seemed only to increase with each new question—"don't you like *her?*"

He gave a sort of short half laugh.

"Not particularly, Di."

"*Why* don't you, Bertie?" she exclaimed.

"Oh,—because she isn't nice."

"But, Bertie,"—

"Oh, tut, Di!" he interrupted impatiently, "have done with your questions. Come away here—I've got something for you to see." And springing up, he suddenly chased her across the grass; and so they both disappeared, and I have seen no more of them.

Saturday, June 12th.—Well, whatever I may wish

in the matter, Bertie, I think, will not soon forget that little disclosure of Di's the other day. For these last three days he has been like a piece of ice in everything I have had to do with him, and I see little sign yet of a thaw; indeed, I think he is freezing rather harder than ever. He is sitting opposite to me now, reading, with his elbows planted on his knees, and his eyes fixed on his book, looking as solemn, and as hard, and as still, as if he was cut in stone. He has been sitting so for the last half-hour, never once raising his eyes, or uttering one syllable. I wonder what he's reading! I think I'll ask him, and see if that—Ah, there his head has started up at last!

"Bertie, what do you see?"

He has thrown down his book and rushed off without answering a word. Oh, I see now! It is my stepmother and Di out there in the garden; and now he is with them, and they are going all together away towards the hill. Well, he might have told me. But I suppose he was afraid that I would go and join them. I am sure he need not have been.

I opened my book, meaning to have an hour's writing, but I don't think I am in a humour for it: I'll go and practise instead. It has been a dull morning, and it looks now as if it was going to turn wet. Such heaps of clouds are coming up from the west.

Tuesday, June 15th.—Bertie went to Mr. Hartwell's for his first day, yesterday: he was away from ten till half-past three. Poor Di made great lamentations about his absence. From the time her lessons were over she would do nothing but stand at the windows or at the gate, watching for his return, and crying out about how long he was in coming. And when she did catch sight of him at last, she set up such a shout of joy, and, springing from my side in the drawing-room where we were together, was in the garden and with him almost in a moment; and I saw him catch her up in his arms, and there was such a commotion of welcome,—such laughing and outbursts of rejoicing, because he has come again.

In the evening there were some people here to

dinner,—the Comptons, and Mr. and Mrs. Curteis, with a Scotch young lady who is staying with them—a Miss Fleming, and Mr. Stephens, and Mr. and Mrs. Hartwell. They dined at six, and we three were in the drawing-room afterwards. We had dined early—when Bertie came home—and while the other dinner was going on Di and I were left alone to entertain one another. Bertie was in papa's room doing his lessons, and we saw nothing of him until, at about half-past seven, he walked in very silently and gravely with his newly finished toilette so wonderfully correct, that I was nearly going off into a fit of laughter at the sight of him, wondering what he must think of Di and me—for Di had been sitting upon my lap for the last half-hour, and my frock and her hair were in a sad state of disarrangement. But I thought it wisest not to do it; so, to cover my inclination, I began very suddenly to busy myself about Di.

"Oh, Di dear, you never can appear in this state! Something *must* be done with your curls to get them smooth."

"Must there? I think they might do, Katie," she said, a little wistfully; and she stood still, and gravely began to make some such singular movements to try and catch sight of them, that I felt rather alarmed for the consequences, till Bertie relieved me by breaking in with—

"Quite hopeless, Di, to attempt to look at your own head."

At which, glancing at him rather doubtfully, she came to a stop, and contented herself with commencing an energetic use of both hands in brushing herself all round; which, however, as curls do not get smoothed very much by being brushed straight over the tops of them, did not produce quite such a brilliant result as was to be desired.

"It will never do, Di," I said laughing; "you must come away to my room."

"Oh, but then they'll come in perhaps when we are away!" she exclaimed.

"No, no, it isn't time yet;" I was beginning consolingly, when Bertie interrupted me with a sudden—"Here, Di!" and as we looked up we

found him holding out a pocket-comb for Di's acceptance.

"Oh, that will just do!" I said. "Come away, Di."

So she came and stood by my side, and I began to comb out and smooth her ruffled curls, doing it as quickly as I could, for she was in great anxiety lest anybody should come in.

Bertie had taken a chair in front of me, and all the time I was operating upon Di, he sat with the most imperturbable gravity, watching the movements of my fingers. So deeply interested he looked, that I was seized with a mischievous desire to laugh at him, and, glancing up when I was nearly done, I asked,—

"Were you thinking of curling your own hair next week, Bertie?"

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed sharply.

"I thought it was the most likely explanation," I said.

He stared at me for a moment, and then, bursting out with—"I can't imagine what you are talking about!"—he started up from his seat, and went to

another part of the room. And, indeed, I don't think he could, for he had such a look of perplexed innocence.

I half laughed, but Di's blue eyes looked sideways round at me so seriously sad and wondering, that they stopped my laughter; and, when, in a moment or two afterwards, I let her go, and she burst away, and running to Bertie, threw her arms round his neck, I thought that instead of laughing, I could more easily have laid my head down and cried.

Neither he nor Di came to me again. They sat together; he upon the sofa near the fire, and she close to him, on a stool at his feet, leaning her little white arms upon his knees. She was dressed in white, with blue ribbons, and her gold curls, all smooth and glossy with their new arranging, fell so thickly and richly round her neck. She looked very lovely—prettier, I think, than I ever saw her look before.

I sat for some time looking half at them, and half out at the window, where a mist was creeping

like a white veil over the hill; and then, at last, it seemed foolish to stay there so long doing nothing, and I got up, and began to look for a book. But I couldn't find the one I wanted, and after a little searching I gave it up, and was just returning to my seat, when Bertie suddenly sprang from the sofa, and going to a pile of books that had been moved from their usual place to a table near the door, came up in a moment with the one I had been looking for.

"Is this the book you wanted?" he asked.

I said, "Oh, yes,—thank you!"—and I thought for a moment that I should have liked to say something more; but he only stayed long enough to put the book into my hand, and was away at his seat on the sofa again, before I had time to utter another syllable.

So I turned away too, and sat down, and began to read.

In a very little while more, however, my stepmother and the other ladies came in, and then my reading, and Bertie's and Di's talking, came of course

to an end; but when Bertie and I had been shaken hands with, and Di had been kissed a good deal, we were left again pretty much to ourselves, except that dear Mrs. Curteis told me to come and sit beside her, which I did, getting into a corner, from which I could amuse myself, by watching whatever was going on.

It was a very quiet evening; there is not much to say about it. There was plenty of talking, and a good deal of music. My stepmother sang, and Miss Fleming played and sang both. I never saw Miss Fleming before. She is very quiet, and last night in the drawing-room she scarcely talked to anybody except to Bertie. For some reason or other—I don't in the least know why—he attached himself to her, after first surveying all the company in silence with great gravity for about a quarter of an hour, and she talked to him—or rather he talked to her, for it was far more his doing than hers, for more than half the evening. Very earnest he looked about it too, sitting beside her, and resolutely putting question after question to her;

very much, I thought, as though some one had given the duty of drawing her out to him, and he was doing his best to fulfil it thoroughly; getting through his work with such ease and readiness, and coolness too, and with such a gravely watchful wise look upon his little thin eager face, as if he had quite a weight of years and cares upon his shoulders.

I wondered what Miss Fleming thought of him. I suppose she must have liked him, for she talked so much more to him than to any one else. As to what he thought of her I could learn very little. I said to him when they were all gone:—

"Well, Bertie, how do you like Miss Fleming?"

But I suppose he saw I was laughing at him; for all he said, with the most immovable gravity, was merely, "Oh, pretty well!" and then he at once began to talk about something else, so that I couldn't say another word. And, in fact, Bertie never *will* be questioned upon any subject that he does not like. You may begin how you choose, but he will manage to turn off your questions,

and always in the coolest and quietest way too, without even giving you the satisfaction of disconcerting him.

Everybody was gone last night by a little after ten.

"I think it's nicer when there's nobody here, Bertie;" poor Di said rather wearily, looking up with sleepy eyes when they were all away.

All Bertie's gravity had completely vanished: in a moment he caught Di up on his knee.

"Poor wee woman, did they not treat you well?" he exclaimed, and he began to gallop her up and down, varying the amusement by a series of kisses, each one of which brought a little shout of laughter from her; the pleasantest sound, I thought, that there had been in the room all night: until my stepmother came up to them, exclaiming, "Oh Bertie, my dear boy, stop! There will be no getting Di to sleep after such a shaking;" at which, with a final kiss, he laughingly set her down, and then my stepmother rang the bell for Susan, and away she went to bed in the blithest spirits. *I* was not

very blithe when I followed her half-an-hour afterwards, for I was tired, and my head was aching.

Saturday, June 19th.—I have just been doing something, that I am so angry with myself about.

I was sitting in the garden half-an-hour ago, reading, when Bertie returned from Mr. Hartwell's, and as he came through the garden from the meadow —for he always comes home that way—he passed close to where I was.

"Are you all alone, Katie?" he called out as he came near.

I said, "Yes," and I hardly looked up, for I thought he would pass straight on; but he did not; he came close up to me, saying,—

"Look here what I've caught;" and, suddenly opening his hand, he showed me a wretched little creature—I don't know what it was—a thing like a tiny lizard.

"Oh, how can you? throw it away!" I exclaimed, pushing his hand back, for I have a horror of creeping things; but all he did was to give one

sharp glance at me, and then, retreating a step, to say resolutely,—

"I'm sure I shall not till I've done with it!"

"Then I'll tell papa!" I exclaimed, getting very hot—for all I thought was, that he meant to torment it in some way—but his only answer was a broad stare of amazement, and then an indignant,—

"What on earth do you mean?"

"I mean that it's very cruel," I said angrily; for, though his manner startled me a little, I was too hot and excited to see that I was wrong. "I mean that it's very cruel; that you have no right to torture creatures like that!"

"*I* torture them!" he cried, with the colour flushing up all over his face; "do you *suppose* that I caught this creature to torture it?"

I am sure I did not *then*. I looked up at him in a kind of dismay at his indignation, for I have never seen him angry before, and then I began to stammer out,—

"I thought you had—I beg your pardon—I didn't know what else you could want with it."

He had cooled down already, so as at least to show no more anger, and he just answered coldly,—

"If you had waited I would have told you. I'm going to do nothing but look at it through the microscope; but you seem to have made up your mind, Kate,"—and the colour half came back again for a moment—"that *everything* I do is to be wrong in some way or another."

And then he turned round and went away before I could think of how to say another word.

I am so sorry—I wish it had not happened. I shall think of it now all day, and I am sure—I am quite sure I shall not be able to say a syllable more to Bertie about it. I don't know, indeed, what I *could* say, except that I am sorry; and if I did say that, I suppose he wouldn't believe me.

Monday, June 21*st.*—Poor Hannah met with a bad accident to-day. She slipped on the stairs, and fell down, and sprained her foot so badly that my stepmother says she is afraid it will be a week or two

before she will be able to use it. She fell almost at the foot of the stairs, and they carried her into my room, because it is down on the ground floor, and she is lying there now, and will have to stay there, the doctor says, until she is able to stand again. We sent for Dr. Scott to come and see her, but my stepmother had done everything that was wanted before he came. It was she who ordered Hannah to be taken into my room, and then she knelt down there at her side and bathed the foot, and bandaged it with her own hands, and never left her till she had done everything to ease her pain that could be done. And she did it all so quickly, and cleverly, and gently. I was in the room, standing by poor Hannah all the time, and thinking so, as I stood looking at her, how I wished that I could do even a thing such as that like her. It was not that I was frightened, or nervous, or anything of that sort, but I felt so stupid, and ignorant, and useless beside her. I could do nothing but the few things she told me, and *she* knew how to do everything, without the least hurry or confusion,

and so quietly, and yet so quickly and well. She was so sweet-tempered, too: though Hannah was very cross and difficult to manage, grumbling at all my stepmother did, and even calling out once that she wished she would let her alone until the doctor came, for she didn't think she was doing anything right, yet she never seemed to notice her ill-humour, but coaxed her, and soothed her, and went on steadily with what she was doing for her, just as if she had been a spoilt child; and I think at last that Hannah felt a little ashamed of herself, for before my stepmother had finished her work she got quite quiet, and when it was all ended she said something rather gruffly, that I think she meant for a kind of attempt to thank her. I'm sure she deserved to be thanked.

Hannah has gone to sleep now. It will seem like old times—when I was a little thing—to have her with me in my room again. I said so to her a little while ago, and she made a very doleful answer. "We're a poor pair of lamesters now, Katie,—very different from what we were then."

Ah Hannah! if *I* had nothing the matter with me but a sprain, that could be cured in a few weeks, I don't think I should mind it much.

There are Bertie and Di in the garden together. I have been watching them for the last hour. They are sitting on one of the garden seats, by the side of the lawn, as quiet as two mice; Bertie reading, and Di just sitting close to him with her hand in his. I don't think he has spoken a word to her all the time they have been there, and yet she has never made a movement to interrupt him, or to leave his side. She looks as happy and contented as if she could stay there all day. Bertie is very fond of that little bright-haired Di. I sometimes wish I had a brother who was as fond of me.

Wednesday, June 23*d.*—Mr. Hartwell sent over yesterday morning to say that Bertie was not to go to him, because he had some business that would take him from home. So papa said that, as it was a holiday, he should like us all to have a ramble

somewhere together, and, as the day was clear, they agreed to go up the East Hill, because there is a fine view from the top of it, and Bertie had not been there yet. They said that I was to go too—not up the hill, of course, but to the foot of it, and my stepmother promised that she would stay with me there, because, she said, laughing, she was getting too old for hill-climbing.

We were to be ready at one o'clock. It was just one when I was dressed, and though, when I came into the hall, I did not see any of the others, yet the entrance door was open, and my chair was standing ready; so I thought I might as well get into it, not to keep them waiting.

Just as I was stepping in Bertie came running round from the garden.

"They're all down in the meadow," he said, "and we're to meet them at the far gate."

"Very well," I answered. "Do you know where Thomas is?"

"Oh, Thomas can't come," he said carelessly; "he's busy about something; I'm going to draw

you," and he came forward to take the handle of the chair, but I cried out,—

"No, no; I won't have *you!* If Thomas can't come I won't go at all;" and I hurriedly began to get out, thinking of nothing but that I would not let him have the trouble of drawing my chair. But I felt in an instant after, that he did not in the least understand what I meant—that he thought it was only my dislike of him which made me so determined not to go—and I was so nervous that I could not in the least explain what I *did* mean.

He only said very gravely and quietly,—

"You had better come, I think; papa will draw you part of the way."

"No, I would rather not, thank you," I said, a little more calmly; "I would rather stay at home;" and I had got out, and was just preparing to go up the steps again, when suddenly my stepmother appeared facing me at the head of them.

"Why, Katie, what are you coming back for?" she exclaimed, looking surprised, "let Bertie get anything you want."

"But I don't want anything," I said. "I am not going at all."

"Not going!" she repeated; "why not?"

"Because Thomas can't come, and I would rather stay at home," I said quickly.

"But, my dear, there is Bertie and papa; it is all arranged," she said.

"No, no; let me stay," I persisted; "do let me stay."

I know that it was so foolish,—that it would have been so much better not to have been so obstinate, but I had got so nervous that I could not have gone then. I suppose my stepmother saw it, for she did not try to persuade me any more; she only gave a quick look from me to Bertie, who stood by the side of the chair, not speaking a word, and then she said cheerfully,—

"Very well, Katie, do as you like. Go in and take your bonnet off; and you, Bertie, come away with me, for papa's waiting."

So they both went together, and I turned away and went by myself into the dining-room, and threw

off my things, and then lay down upon the sofa, and broke out crying.

I felt so wretched, and so ashamed and solitary, and it was all my own doing and my own fault. I was so unhappy that I think I might have lain there crying until I made myself quite ill if it had not been for my kind stepmother. I thought, of course, that she had gone with the others, but she had not. I had not been ten minutes alone when she came quite quietly into the room,—so quietly that I never heard her until she laid her hand upon my shoulder.

"Now, Katie, my child, what is all this?" she said.

I started up, for I didn't know what to say to her; but she sat down by my side, and put her arm about me, and made me talk to her. She made me answer her question. I don't well know how I did it, or what I said to her; I can hardly remember, for I was crying so foolishly all the time; I only know that I tried to tell her, how I was crying because I couldn't be friends with

Bertie, because it always seemed as if I was doing things to vex him, and that I didn't want to vex him—that I wanted him to like me—as I liked him now.

She was so good to me: she didn't call me foolish; she spoke so cheerfully and kindly to me.

"Don't lose heart, Katie," she said; "you have no need to do it. You and Bertie have not begun quite right; we won't mind whether that was your fault or his—but all you have to do now is to look forward, not to look back. Behave to Bertie, if you can, as you would do to anybody else, and he won't be long in seeing that you like him, and in learning to like you too. Take the first step, Katie,—make the first advance, and then the rest will be easy. Bertie is perhaps a little proud and offended now, but let him once see that you are ready to be friends with him, and there will be nothing more to do. Bertie's is not a heart that takes much to melt it."

She was so kind; she talked to me till my tears were all dried. And she never left me alone again. She took me with her to the drawing-room presently,

and we stayed there together until, almost at dinner-time, the others returned home.

They came in such high spirits, exclaiming that it was such a glorious day, and that they had had such a splendid ramble. They talked for a few minutes about their walk, and then suddenly papa turned to me.

"By the way, Katie," he said jokingly, "I want an explanation of this violent attachment of yours to Thomas. How is it that I never heard of it before?"

"Oh, papa," I answered half laughing, "it isn't an attachment at all."

"Not an attachment!" he exclaimed; "Why, Bertie tells me that you absolutely refused to leave the house this morning because you couldn't have him by your side."

"Well, so I did," I said; "but it was because I knew it would spoil your walk if you and Bertie had to draw my chair."

Papa said kindly—

"You foolish child, you shouldn't have let that

keep you at home. You ought to have known that it couldn't have spoiled *my* walk, Katie; and as for Bertie, I don't think *he* would have minded the trouble much—would you, my boy?"

Bertie had been standing at one of the windows, looking towards us, but not saying anything. As soon as papa spoke to him he answered in his quick quiet way—

"I couldn't, sir, for there wouldn't have been any trouble about it. I didn't know what Kate meant, or I would have told her so."

I said "Thank you," and that was all. They began immediately to talk about something else.

We had a very quiet evening together in the house. After tea, in the twilight, as she nearly always does, my stepmother went to the piano and sang. I was sitting with Di in one of the windows before she began. I had been showing her some pictures, sitting on a low chair, and she on a stool beside me: but the pictures had been done a good while, and when it got dusk I had drawn my chair a little back, for Bertie came to where we were and

took another stool opposite to Di,—and I knew that she wouldn't care for me now that he had come.

He had been playing with her at first, but when my stepmother began to sing he slipped from his seat, and stretched himself on the ground, and laid his head on Di's lap, drawing one of her arms round his neck. She seemed to think that it was the most natural thing in the world to do, for she never said a word, but only gave a little smile, and then began at once to stroke and play with his hair; pushing it off his forehead, and combing her little white fingers through it, and stooping sometimes, till all her gold curls fell over his face, to kiss him, smiling to herself all the time, and whispering little soft cooing words over him, hardly as if she were a child at all,—I mean, as if she loved him more than a child could ever do.

I could not turn away from them, they were so beautiful. I sat in the shade and watched them till the tears came into my eyes; and then I rose quietly up and stole away. I went to my own room, where Hannah was lying fast asleep, and I

crept quietly to the window and sat down there. They did not miss me; only, a long time afterwards, when it had got as dark as the moon would let it be, there came a little tap outside my door, and Di's voice called—

"I'm going to bed, Katie!"

I went to the door and let her in; and then I sat down, and she climbed up on my knee, and I held her fast.

"Katie, do you like sitting here alone?" she asked, a little wonderingly.

"Yes; sometimes."

"But it's nicer in the drawing-room," she said. And then in a moment, when I did not answer, she broke out—"Bertie said he thought you would be here."

"Did he?" I said, "Who asked him?"

"Oh, nobody," she answered; "but he said I was to come and say good night to you."

"And would you not have come by yourself, Di?" I asked; at which she laughed, and said she didn't know; and then in the next instant put up her hands

and clasped them round my neck, and began kissing me in an impetuous little way that she has sometimes.

"I mustn't stay," she said when this was over, "because Susan's waiting."

So I let her run away, and presently I brushed my hair by the moonlight, and went back again to the drawing-room, leaving Hannah still asleep.

Poor Hannah, she had had a restless day with pain and impatience, and was quite worn out.

Friday, June 25th.—A little thing happened yesterday that I am glad of.

I had been writing my journal in the afternoon, and when it was finished I went to my room, thinking I would sit there with Hannah and read to her till dinner-time. The door of the room was not quite closed when I got to it, so I merely pushed it open, and went in without making any noise; and the first thing I saw, was my stepmother sitting by Hannah's side, and holding her hand, and Hannah lying crying.

Before I could imagine what it meant, or knew whether I ought to go or stay, my stepmother looked up, and called out cheerfully, "Don't go away, Katie; Hannah will be glad to have you;" and she softly put Hannah's hand down, and rose up as she spoke. Hannah didn't say anything, nor did I: I didn't know what to say. My stepmother turned to Hannah again and said a few words to her very kindly, about lying quietly, and not troubling herself about anything that ought to be done, to which Hannah answered earnestly, several times, "Yes, yes; I will;" and then she went away, and left Hannah and me together.

I had been wondering all the week what Hannah was thinking of my stepmother now. My stepmother had been so kind to her: I think if anything had happened to one of her own children she could not have done more than she did for Hannah, and yet Hannah had scarcely once thanked her. Even to me she had hardly said a word about her; only once—the day before yesterday—after she had been doing something to the bandages about

Hannah's foot, as she went out of the room Hannah had said half to herself, "Well, she's got a pair of clever hands!" and that was all I had ever got from her as to what she was thinking or feeling.

But I knew that something had happened now, and though I sat down by Hannah's side, and opened the book I had brought without saying anything, yet I was wanting so much to ask her what it was that had made her cry, that, though I read for ten minutes, I hardly knew anything about what I was reading; nor did Hannah either, as it soon turned out, for suddenly, in the very middle of a sentence, she all at once broke out, as if there was no reading going on at all:—

"I'll never speak another word against her as long as I'm living, Katie!"

I put down my book at once, and I said, as gravely as I could, for she had nearly made me laugh,—

"Won't you, Hannah? Why?"

She didn't answer me for a moment, and then she said impetuously,—

"Because she's a real lady!"

"And didn't you know that before?" I asked.

"Didn't I see when my eyes were shut?" she answered briskly. "It's easy not knowing a thing when you've not a mind to know it, Katie."

And then, as she became quite quiet again after saying that, I asked her after a few minutes, half hesitating,—

"Hannah, do you like her now?"

She didn't hesitate when she answered me. People say that Hannah is always in extremes,—that she is always either loving or hating,—and perhaps it may be true, but when she *says* she loves, she loves really; I know that. And it gave me a strange kind of feeling to hear her talk as she did yesterday of my stepmother. It wasn't all gladness; it was a feeling half of jealousy and sorrow at first: it seemed as if Hannah was forgetting what mamma had been to her, and how she had loved her once; and yet, in spite of that, by degrees it *did* turn to gladness. I liked to hear her tell me how kind and good my stepmother

was. I sat by her side listening to her, and making her talk, and asking her questions, with a kind of hunger in me to hear all that she would say. My stepmother had melted her heart by what she had done for her this week; and just before I came in, out of pure shame and remorse, Hannah had at last been making confession to her, and asking to be forgiven for all the wrong things she had said and thought. "It was better for her to know the whole of it, Katie," she said, "and so I told it to her. And now I've done with it—for good and all!" she said triumphantly.

I wonder whether *I* shall ever confess my sins to my stepmother, and then be done with them for good and all! I laughed at Hannah when she said that, and yet I envied her. *She* seemed to think it was so easy to say that she had been wrong; and it seems so hard to *me*. And yet, if I thought my stepmother cared for me—if I thought she would ever love me—I almost think I could say it now.

I am writing in the drawing-room all alone this

morning, for Bertie is in bed—ill with a bad headache, and Di has been sitting with him in his room ever since breakfast. It is about one o'clock now, and I have had such a dull, quiet morning, without even the sound of their voices near me. Oh, how things change! and how we change along with them! To think how short a time ago it was that every day was like this, and I was breaking my heart at the thought of what was coming!

Saturday, June 26th.—I am going to have a whole morning of writing. Bertie is at Mr. Hartwell's, and Di is doing her lessons with my stepmother, and I shall have the next two hours quite to myself.

All the afternoon passed yesterday, and Bertie was never able to rise until after dinner. We did not know even then that he was getting up, until we returned from the dining-room, and met him coming downstairs. He was much better then, he said—his headache would soon be gone; and, as soon as we were all in the drawing-room, he called Di to him, and, lying down on one of the sofas,

made room for her to sit, rolled up like a little ball beside him, and began to talk to her almost in his usual way.

We had tea early, partly on Bertie's account, and partly because my stepmother had promised to go up in the evening to Mrs. Hartwell's, to arrange with her and some other ladies about getting up a clothing club. Immediately after tea, my stepmother went upstairs to get ready for her walk, telling Di to come with her, and when they came down again, to my surprise, Di was dressed too, and my stepmother said she was going to take her with her, to play with the little Hartwells, for she wanted Bertie to be kept quiet, and there would be no managing that if Di stayed with him. So they went away together, and Bertie and I were left alone.

He was still lying on the sofa where he had been playing with Di, and when they went he took up a book and began to read; but he looked so pale and languid, that after hesitating for a few moments I went up to him, and said,—

"I don't think you ought to read, Bertie; I'm sure it will make you worse if you do."

He looked up as if he was a little surprised, and said quickly,—

"Oh no, it won't!—my headache is so much better."

"But could *I* not read to you?" I asked, and, though I wanted so much to do it, I spoke so coldly that I am sure it was no wonder he answered as he did:—

"Oh yes, if there was any need; but I am quite able to read to myself, thank you."

And then he took up his book again, which he had laid for a moment on his knee; and, not knowing what more to say, I turned away rather sadly to go back to my place. But before I reached it, he suddenly called out—

"Kate, throw a cushion at me, will you?"

"What for?" I asked, looking back.

"Oh, I want one here," he said; "I never can get the pillows of this sofa right." And, half getting up, he began to shake the pillows about in a way that

did not seem to me very likely to improve their position much.

"Let me do it; I know how to put them comfortably," I said, and I went to him again; on which he peacefully gave them up to me without a word, and let me arrange them, watching the process with great interest and gravity.

"Now try them," I said; "is that right?"

He lay back, and exclaimed that it was delicious. "I don't know how you've done it; I never can get them like that," he said.

I stood for a moment or two at the head of the sofa, thinking whether I should say anything more about reading to him or not. I did not want to tease him, and yet I wished I could do something for him. I stood for a few moments, and then at last I said—and I *did* say it this time, I think, as if I meant it,—

"Bertie, I *wish* you would let me read to you. I should like it so much."

He gave me one of his quick examining looks, and then said, in the frank abrupt way he has :—

"I thought it would worry you, Kate."

"Oh no, it wouldn't," I answered eagerly; "I should like it; I'm very fond of reading aloud."

"Then I should like it," he said, "if you would."

And without another word he quietly gave me the book, and I sat down beside him and began to read.

I read, I dare say, for an hour and a half, until he called to me to stop, because it was beginning to get dark. As I shut the book—"Thank you; that has been nice!" he said; and then for a good while we were both quiet.

He had raised himself up, so as to be able to see out at the window, and he sat so now, gazing out with that strange earnest look that he so often has upon his face, as though—so it always seems to me—he could not do even the smallest thing without putting his heart into it. I could see him very well, for, though it became dark soon within the room, the sky had lately grown very clear, and there was a moon, too, just broken from the clouds.

We had sat for a good while without speaking, when all at once he exclaimed:—

"I can't think what there is in this window that always reminds me of Broughton."

"I shouldn't think anything here could be much like Westmoreland scenery," I said; "all our hills are so low."

"Oh, it isn't the hills that are like," he answered; "it's something in the way the fields lie there, with the wood behind them. As for the hills, they're nothing; you southern people don't know what real hills are. Now, I suppose, Kate, you never saw one more than a thousand feet high in your life?"

"Why, Bertie," I said, "I've been in Wales."

"In Wales! have you? You never told me!" he exclaimed, turning suddenly round.

"No," I said, half laughing at his impetuous tone; "I didn't suppose you would care to hear it."

He made no answer to that, but went on quickly;—

"Tell me what you saw,—what parts did you go to?"

And I had to tell him all the course of our journey, and the names of all the chief places we stopped at.

"Kate, shouldn't you like to live there?" he asked eagerly, when I had ended.

"In Wales?" I said. "Oh, no! I shouldn't like to live anywhere but here."

I thought there was a sort of incredulous wonder in the look he gave me when I said that; so I added quickly,—

"Why, Bertie, I've lived here all my life, you know."

"Ah, to be sure," he said composedly. "And girls seem always to like to live in one place."

I did not quite like his saying that, and I answered rather irritably:—

"Well, I don't see why they shouldn't; I don't like people who can't get fond of places."

He made no answer to that, and so, after a moment or two, I added more gently,—

"But perhaps you never lived long in one place, Bertie?"

"Why?" he asked, turning quickly round. "I didn't say *I* was not fond of places."

"I beg your pardon, I thought you meant that," I said.

"No, I didn't; I only meant that boys care more for travelling about than girls do," he answered. "I have lived in one place, and in one house all my life; and I think it's the dearest old house in the world."

"But—I thought you had lived lately at your grandfather's?" I said.

"I never lived anywhere *but* at my grandfather's," he answered, looking surprised; "at the Rectory."

"But hadn't your father a house of his own?" I asked, half hesitating, half inclined to laugh.

"No; we all lived at the Rectory," he said. "It's a great big house, and when mamma married it was much larger than grandpapa and aunt Charlotte wanted, so grandpapa made papa and mamma have half of it. Papa was grandpapa's curate, you know."

"And now your grandpapa is left all alone!" I exclaimed; of course I had known that before;

but it struck me at that moment with such pity. "Oh, Bertie, how he must miss you all!"

"Yes; he was very sorry," Bertie answered quietly; "but he won't be alone long," he added after a few moments, "for aunt Charlotte is married now, and has children, and they are going to take our place at the Rectory when Christmas comes."

"Bertie," I said, after a little while,—we had both been quite silent for a few minutes,—"Bertie, do you remember your father?"

I spoke softly; I was not quite sure if he would like me to ask him. He looked up at me quickly as I spoke.

"Why, of course!" he said at once. "He lived till I was eight years old."

"And did you know when he was dying?" I asked. "Did they tell you?"

"Everybody knew," he answered. "He was ill almost a year. He died of consumption."

I don't know how it was,—I hardly said anything more,—and yet in two or three minutes after this

he was talking as he never had talked to me before. He was telling me about his father,—all about his long illness, and his death.

He told it to me so simply and so calmly, never from first to last saying one word about himself or his own grief; and yet, if he had talked of that all the time, I do not think I could have felt more than I did, when he had finished speaking, how this death had been to him all that my mother's was to me.

"Bertie, you must have been very fond of him," I said, half below my breath, when he had told it all to me.

He was looking out upon the garden, but as I spoke he turned for a moment round to me.

"Fond of him!" he repeated quickly. "Oh, Kate, don't speak of that." And then, before he turned away again, I saw the tears springing up for the first time.

They sprang into my own eyes too, and, without thinking—without caring, at least—how little right I had to speak in such a way, I broke out passionately,—

"Oh, Bertie, does it not seem strange, that, while it all stays so fresh with *us*, your mother can have forgotten your father's death, and my father my mother's, and be married again?"

"Nobody ever said they had *forgotten*, Kate," he answered, very quietly and gravely.

"But, Bertie," I said, "they must have forgotten, don't you think?"

"I don't know; no, I don't see that they must," he answered, rather slowly. "I don't know that our love for a person who is dead need be altered by loving another: I am sure *I* don't love my own father a bit the less for loving yours now."

"Oh, Bertie, do you not?" I asked eagerly. "That is just what has perplexed me so. I've been so unhappy about it; I haven't known what I ought to do."

He looked very hard at me, but without saying a word. When he didn't speak, with a sudden rather desperate resolution, I added,—

"Bertie, I wish you would tell me what you think. Wouldn't it be doing wrong to my own

mother, to allow myself to love anybody else as I loved her?"

I know he was surprised at me; I saw that in the odd, almost suspicious look he gave me, before he attempted to answer. After a moment he just said very gravely,—

"I don't know that it would be, *if you could.*"

And then, when I made no answer, he added presently,—

"*I* couldn't. I mean I never could love any one else *as* I loved my father, not however good he was; and I don't think anybody else could either, who had ever cared very much for their first father or mother. It wouldn't be natural, Kate."

He spoke with such a simple, quiet kind of confidence, so calmly and unhesitatingly. Ever since *I* had begun to love my stepmother at all, my great fear had been, that I might love her too much. And now, when Bertie spoke, I seemed to feel, for the first time, that I had all along been fearing a thing that could never be. I felt so

humbled,—as if, loving my mother as I do, I *ought* to have known this long ago,—and yet so glad, as if a weight had been taken off me.

"Bertie," I said, after a minute's silence, "do you think, then, that we ought to love a step-father or stepmother as much as we can?"

"I think that we ought to love everybody that is good as much as we can," he answered very simply; "and I'm sure, if we have a good step-father or stepmother, we ought to love *them*, because, as they are put in the place of our own father or mother, they have a right to our love, just as they have to our obedience."

"Then, Bertie," I said slowly, "you are not sorry that your mother has married papa?"

"No," he said, quite firmly.

And when I said nothing more, after a little pause, he asked,—

"Are you, Kate?"

I hesitated for a moment, and then, like him, but only half aloud, and with my heart beating fast, I also said,—

"No."

We sat after that for a long time without speaking another word, until at last I told him to look what a bright shimmer the moon was making down upon the river; and suddenly from that we got to talking about boating, and then he began to tell me about the rowing he used to have at home: for they had a boat of their own, he said, and he and some of his schoolfellows used to have races on the lake together, and get into such excitement about the winning. And he told me, too, how he and Di would go out together, and let the boat float for hours while they sat reading, and how in the evenings, when his mother and his grandfather would join them, they would have long rows for hours, till it got quite dark. He told me all this, and ever so much besides, looking so animated and excited, that it was quite pleasant to listen to him.

He was still talking about his boating, when suddenly the door opened, and a stream of light burst into the room, and papa's voice exclaimed,—

"What, still in darkness here? Why, Katie,"—for as he came in he could only see me—"are you sitting all alone?"

"No, sir," Bertie said, answering for me, and springing up from his sofa.

"Oh! are you here? Then why didn't you ring for lights, my boy?"

"I don't know. I don't think we wanted them," Bertie said. "At least I don't know if Katie wanted them," he added, half hesitating.

"And you politely never thought of asking?" papa said.

"But I didn't want them, papa," I interrupted. "Bertie knew that, if I had, I should have said so."

"I never thought about it at all," Bertie said very frankly, at which we both laughed, and papa said drily,—

"An industrious evening you must have passed here in the dark. What kind of an account do you expect to give of yourselves to your mother when she comes home? And here she is too!"

he exclaimed, for a knock came at this instant to the door, and he turned round to go and let her in; but Bertie, quicker than he, sprang before him, and had the entrance door open before papa had reached the hall.

They all came back to the drawing-room together, papa foremost with the lamp, then Di, who darted across the room to me, and was on my knee in an instant, crushing her broad hat in a ruinous way upon my shoulder, and pouring forth a most confusedly energetic account of what her doings had been; and then Bertie, with his arm round his mother's waist, and his face raised up to her with as eager and earnest a gaze as though she had been away from him a week at least. She seemed a good deal less impressed by the meeting, however, than he was, and her bright eyes, instead of fixing themselves upon him at all, were darting in the most lively way as she came in from one to another of us.

"Well, how have you been getting on without me?" she asked merrily.

"Shockingly, mamma!" papa answered.

"Capitally!" Bertie said.

"What does Katie say?" my stepmother asked, laughing.

"Oh! I agree with Bertie," I said.

"Exactly! Katie hasn't a word to say for herself," papa exclaimed. "Bertie has got *her* in his hands completely."

We all laughed except Di, whose blue eyes opened wide as she cried out in her little treble voice,—

"What does he mean, Katie? How can Bertie have got you in his hands?"

But Bertie interrupted her with a quick,—

"Why don't you deny it, Kate?"

"You unprincipled boy, what would you have her do that for?" papa exclaimed, and set us all laughing again.

"Nobody asks what Di and I have been about," my stepmother said good humouredly; and so then the talk went off to clothing-clubs, and committees, and subscriptions, and Di, giving back her mind

to the events of the evening, resumed her excited confidences to me, or rather, to me and Bertie together, for Bertie had left his mother's side by this time, and had joined us now, half kneeling on a stool at my side, so as to bring himself on a level with Di's face; and there we all talked for a pleasant ten minutes together, until Susan came to carry Di away to bed, and my stepmother rang the bell for supper.

"Do you see that it is near half-past eleven o'clock?" papa exclaimed, when we had sat round the table talking for a good while. "Is that a fit hour for an invalid to be out of bed, Bertie?"

"*I'm* not an invalid, sir," Bertie answered a little indignantly.

"Are you not? Why, I thought you had been playing the invalid all day," papa exclaimed, laughing.

"But I am quite well now," Bertie said hastily. "I'm never so well as after a headache. I could sit up all night, now."

"Ah! we will be content to take that upon your word for the present, my boy," papa answered

rather drily,—at which the least tinge of colour came into Bertie's cheek, until my stepmother and I both laughed, and then he laughed too, and exclaiming good-humouredly, "You shall see some day!" sprang up from his seat, and went to light our candles.

We said good-night to them, and went out of the room together.

"We have had a very pleasant evening," Bertie said when he had closed the door.

He said it so demurely, and yet in such an odd, half-questioning tone, that I was nearly laughing; but I did my best to look grave, and answered with becoming seriousness,—

"Yes, very pleasant."

"Better than going to Mr. Hartwell's," he added after a moment.

"It's rather nice going to Mr. Hartwell's sometimes," I suggested.

"I like staying at home best," he said resolutely.

"So do I," I answered; and, as we had reached my door then, I stopped.

"I hope you will sleep well," he said with great gravity, as he put out his hand to me.

"Oh! Bertie, I've no doubt I shall," I exclaimed, fairly laughing out this time.

He gave a quick glance at me, and then the solemn look suddenly vanished.

"I didn't know that you always slept well, Kate," he said.

"Always, except when I'm ill," I answered.

"Well, but you're ill now," he said quickly.

"Oh no, I'm not!" I exclaimed; "I don't call *this* being ill; and besides, I am very well indeed to-night."

He stood for a moment or two without speaking, with such a grave, compassionate look on his face; then suddenly he put out his hand again.

"I'm keeping you out of bed," he said in his quick way.

So we said good-night to one another, and he ran away up-stairs, and I went into my room. I went in, feeling so glad; I was so happy, that I couldn't go at once to bed. I sat down, shading the candle so that the light should not fall on

Hannah's face and waken her, feeling so happy that I could have burst out singing all alone. I had wanted so much that Bertie should like me, and now I knew that he *did* like me to-night, and I liked *him* more than I had ever done before. He had been so very, very nice to me. Oh, I was so happy! I had cried more than once lately because I could not get on with Bertie, and now I hardly knew whether to laugh or cry for joy, I was so glad.

Monday, June 28th.—Eleven, P.M.—*My own room.*—I want to sit up for half-an-hour to write about a little talk that I had with papa this afternoon. It was of my own seeking. I met him by chance in the hall after dinner, and seized upon him.

"Papa," I said, "I want you for five minutes."

"Is it for a private interview, Katie?" he asked; and I laughed and said, "Yes;" so we went into the garden together.

"Papa, I want you to do something," I said, "I want a very great favour. It's something that would make me so happy."

He took my hand that I had put within his arm, and said so kindly,—

"Well, what is this great thing, Katie!"

He was looking so very kind and complying, that I thought I would tell him plainly at once; so I said, as coaxingly as I could,—

"Papa, dear, I want you to give Bertie a boat."

But I was a little disappointed at how my request was received, for all papa did was suddenly to exclaim,—

"Oh, ho! so master Bertie has been putting you up to this?"

"No, no, he has not, papa!" I cried, "he knows nothing about it; he never would have asked himself, or have set me to do it either."

"Then what *has* 'set you to do it,' as you call it?" papa said, laughing again quite good-humouredly.

So I told him how it was,—how Bertie had been talking to me the other night about the boating that he used to have, and how I was sure that if papa would give him a boat it would be such a delight to him.

He did not answer me quite at once when I had done speaking, and I was beginning to get very anxious to know what he was thinking, when at last he said,—

"Katie, I've been intending to give you something for yourself in a little while, which I believe you would have liked very much. Will you give this up to have the boat for Bertie?"

"Oh yes!" I said.

"What, without knowing what it is?" he exclaimed, laughing. "Take care! Are you quite sure, Katie?"

I hesitated when he said that for a moment; but then I felt so very sure that I could care for nothing he could give me for myself so much as I should do for this boat for Bertie, that in a minute I looked up, laughing too, and said again,—

"Yes, quite sure."

I thought that perhaps he would tell me then what the thing was that he meant; but he did not: he only smiled without speaking, and stroked my hair, and then after a minute or so he said

that Bertie should have the boat, and we talked a little about it,—about what size it should be, and how long it would take to make, and I made him promise not to say anything to Bertie about it till it was ready, and when all that was settled we went in-doors again,—I so delighted with my success.

But in the drawing-room a little disappointment met me, for instead of having a nice evening just by ourselves, as I had been hoping we might have, I found that Mrs. Fletcher and Maria had come to call, and they stayed to tea, and indeed till nearly ten o'clock, and I had to talk to Maria, or to stay beside her at the piano, almost all the time, and I scarcely got a word spoken either to Bertie or Di all night: indeed Bertie, having spent ten minutes in solemnly examining our guests, had evidently made up his mind that he did not approve of them, for he immediately afterwards went away and shut himself up in another room, never returning till it was getting dusk, and then only coming back to play alone with Di in one of the windows; so it

was not a very pleasant evening, and I was not sorry when the Fletchers said at last that they must go.

When they were gone away I went to where Bertie was sitting now, with Di upon his knee.

"Got your liberty at last, Kate!" he exclaimed, as I came near; "what a night you've had of it!"

"Oh yes," I said, "and I'm *so* tired with talking."

I sat down on a stool that was before his chair, and turning towards him leaned my arm out across little Di's lap,—a proceeding which she seemed to find very comical.

"Oh, Di, I'm starving for a kiss," I said.

"Starving!" she echoed, with a merry laugh; "people never starve except for want of food, Katie."

"Well, Di, kisses are one sort of food."

"Oh, they are not!" she exclaimed, in rather an alarmed tone; "are they, Bertie?"

"We'll try, Di; we'll put you upon kisses for two or three days, and see how you thrive," he said gravely. "There; there's one kiss to begin with,

and Katie will give you another, and that will be supper, Di."

"Oh, Bertie, as if I could live upon that!" she exclaimed, laughing.

"What, you want more? Then Katie shall give you two: there, go to her," and he pushed her to me, and, still half laughing and protesting against such a system, she put her little warm arms round my neck, and I kissed her, not twice, but a dozen times at least,—indeed, until the proceeding was interrupted and put a stop to altogether by Susan's coming to carry her away to bed,

Tuesday, June 29th.—After dinner.—This afternoon, when I was alone in the dining-room, papa come in with his hat on, as if he had been out, and to my great delight he told me that he had been down to old Hewitt's about Bertie's boat, and that Hewitt had shown him a boat that he had by him,—one that the Delisles had ordered, and left on his hands when they went off,—and papa thought it would do capitally, only he said

that it would be best that Bertie should see it before he decided to take it; and so I was to tell Bertie about it when he came home, that they might walk over together before dinner and look at it.

I had rather wanted not to have told Bertie anything about it until we could have taken him down to the river and shown it to him there, quite ready to take a row in it; but, after papa had been so good in going at once to arrange about getting it, I thought it would seem ungrateful to make any objection to what he proposed; so I said I would tell Bertie, and I thanked him very much.

This was only about half-an-hour before Bertie's time for coming home. I went to the window presently and watched for him, and as soon as I caught sight of him opening the meadow-gate I went out and met him.

"Where are you going, Kate?" he cried, as soon as he saw me; "do you want a walk?"

"No," I said; "I only came this way because

I saw you;" and then, as I turned with him back towards the house, I went on,—"I was coming to tell you that papa wanted you to go out with him for a little."

"What, now? is he waiting?" Bertie cried,—and he looked as if he was prepared to take flight that instant, but I said quickly,—

"No, not exactly; wait a moment. I was to tell you what he wanted you for. He wanted you to go with him to old Hewitt's, to look at a boat."

"A boat! What for?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, to see if you like it; because, if you do, it's for you," I said, bringing out my bit of news very stupidly; but I didn't know how else to do it.

He turned such an odd look up to me,—half eager, half perplexed.

"For *me*, Katie? Are you sure?" he exclaimed.

"Oh, yes, I'm very sure;" I said, laughing.

Then such a flash of light came into his face.

"Splendid!" he cried. "But Kate," he broke out, "what can have made him think of it? I

never said a word to him. I wonder if——Katie?" he suddenly exclaimed.

I burst out laughing, for I knew by the tone of that last word that he had guessed. But I saw papa at that moment in the distance, and I hurried Bertie off.

"There is papa looking for you, Bertie; run away."

He only waited for another instant.

"Katie, what a girl you are!" he cried; and then away he sprang, and was across the lawn and at papa's side before I had done laughing.

Well, he went to see his boat, and he came back so delighted! It was everything that he wanted —a first-rate boat, he said; and it was to be perfectly ready for him in a couple of days. "And then we'll have such rows, Kate!" he exclaimed.

"Like the rows we used to have at home, shall we, Bertie?" Di said, beating her little hands together; she was almost as excited as he was himself.

"Just like those, Di; only we'll have Katie with us now."

"Here's mamma! Mamma, Bertie's got a boat!" Di shouted, at the top of her voice, bursting away from where we three had been standing together by one of the garden seats, and running with open arms to meet my stepmother. "Bertie's got a boat, and we're going to have rows like those we used to have at home! Mamma, isn't it nice?"

"Very nice, my little Di;" and my stepmother came up, laughing, to join us.

"Has papa told you, mamma?" Bertie asked, eagerly.

"Yes, I have heard of it," she said; "and I have heard whose doing it was, too;" and she looked at me so kindly, — almost *more* than kindly.

"I only gave the hint," I said, quickly; "papa did all the rest."

"But in this case, I fancy, as in many others," she said, "the hint was the principal part of the matter. What do you think, Bertie?"

"I think that Katie is—" he began, energetically, and then suddenly stopped and laughed.

"What do you think that Katie is?" my stepmother asked, laughing too.

He looked up with an odd kind of hesitating fun for an instant, and then abruptly concluded:—

"The finest girl in the world—except Di."

And turning round with the last word, he caught Di up in the air and kissed her.

My stepmother broke into a peal of laughter, and Di did the same, and after a moment I followed Di. The only one of us who preserved composure was Bertie himself, who, the instant he had given expression to this compliment, seemed determined to ignore its utterance; and indeed I am afraid that he was altogether scandalized at the merriment that broke out around him, for, after surveying us with extreme gravity for a moment or two, he suddenly shouted, "Be off, Di!" and clapping his hands, in another instant, while we were still laughing, they were away together across the lawn in full race for the house.

My stepmother and I were left alone. She looked after Bertie and Di without speaking till they had

both disappeared, and then she turned round to me and smiled.

"Well, Katie, is it all right now?" she said.

I had been laughing a minute before, but now, as she spoke, the tears sprang into my eyes. Yes, it *was* right, and I was very happy. I went to her, and put my arms up round her neck. I wanted to tell her how glad I was,—I wanted to say something to her. But I couldn't say much. I said a few words, and then I stopped and hesitated; and then I could do nothing but suddenly whisper, trembling all over,—

"Oh, I only want one thing more; if *you* could love me too."

She answered me at once, her clear beautiful voice coming almost laughing.

"*I*, Katie!" she exclaimed; and with her hands she raised my face, and forced me to look up; "*I*, Katie! why, you foolish child, what more do you want? Don't you know that I love you already?"

For an instant I looked at her so joyfully; but then, before I could speak, all my undutifulness,

all my obstinacy and unloveableness seemed to rise before me, and I coloured up with shame, and cried confusedly that she could not love me, for I had never deserved any love from her; and then I stood before her almost crying.

But she said, so sweetly and gravely,—

"Katie, between mother and daughter there should be no talk of *deserving*. You have a claim upon my love. I am only glad that I have been able to give it so easily and so warmly."

I believed her,—nobody could have helped believing her as she spoke. But with my joy there came such a shadow of shame still!

"If you knew all; I have been so very wrong," I half sobbed.

She said at once, quite quietly and gently,—

"I *do* know all. Yes, you were wrong, Katie; but your fault was a natural and generous one. I have watched you from the beginning; if I have never spoken of what was passing in your mind, it was not for want of sympathy with you. I left you to yourself because I felt sure that you would work

yourself right. If I was mistaken in that,—if my speaking would have saved you any pain,—forgive me, dear."

"No, no; you are always right," I said.

We stood together without speaking for a few moments, and then in her clear, cheerful voice, she said,—

"And now, Katie, there is to be no more misunderstanding between us; is it not so?"

And I answered, "Yes;" and then, lifting up my hands again about her neck, I said something to her quickly,—I hardly know what,—about my love for her, only I know I called her "mother," and she kissed me so warmly more than once, and said I was her "dear child;" and then we went in-doors together, she walking by my side, and talking again of Bertie and his boat, and other things, just in her usual cheerful way.

But when we got to the house, I slipped away, and went and sat by myself till the bell rang for dinner, for I was so happy that I wanted for a little while to be alone.

Thursday, July 1st.—Bertie's boat was to have been ready this afternoon, but now old Hewitt says the paint will not be dry until the day after to-morrow. "Two more whole days to wait!" as Di sorrowfully cried a little while ago.

Bertie was by when she said that, and he called out cheerfully,—

"Never mind, Di; we'll have our first row on Saturday, now, and that will be nice, for Saturday's Kate's birthday."

"How do you know that, Bertie?" I asked.

But he only laughed, and asked if I thought he knew nothing about me but what I told him; and then he ran off into the garden, and I have seen—

I was going to say that I had seen nothing of him or Di since, but just as I was about to write it in he came again, and walked up to my chair.

"Katie," he exclaimed, "what *do* you always write in that big book about?"

"Oh, about a great many things," I said laughing.

He sat down on a chair beside me, and leant across my shoulder.

"Show me something," he said.

"Out of my journal?—oh, no!" I exclaimed, shutting it up.

"But I saw my name," he said.

"I daresay you did;" I answered, laughing; "and that's all the more reason why I shouldn't show you."

"Why?" he asked quite gravely.

"Because nobody shows people what they write about them."

But instead of being silenced by that, he answered coolly—

"Never mind what other people do; show me myself somewhere else, Katie."

"Why, you egotistical boy!" I exclaimed, laughing, "don't you care to see about anybody but yourself?"

"Yes; but I want to know what you say of me," he persisted, not a bit disconcerted.

"Oh, Bertie, I've said a good many things," I answered. "You wouldn't like some of them at all."

He looked up with a very bright smile. I don't know if he thought my speech complimentary.

"Let me see them, Katie," he said coaxingly.

But I held my book fast shut, and cried, laughing, that I would not.

"If you won't show it to anybody it's a great shame of you to write so much," he exclaimed.

"Well, I shall be obliged to stop soon," I said. "Look here!" and I turned over the few remaining blank pages of my poor old journal.

"But won't you begin another when that's done?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't know," I said: "I suppose it will depend upon whether anybody gives me another."

"Then I hope nobody will!" he exclaimed energetically; "at least," he added the next moment, "if you don't want one very much, Katie."

"I don't know if I do," I said a little doubtfully; "I have liked writing some of this very much, but it does take up a great deal of time."

"Can't you write shorter?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, of course I *could*," I said, "but then I don't think I should care much about it."

"*I* should care ten times more for it!" he ex-

claimed. "I can't think *how* you can have the patience to write as you do, Kate; or what you can find to say even! I don't think I could write ten lines where you write ten pages."

"Oh yes, you could, if you once began," I said.

"Then I never will begin!" he exclaimed: "journals are girls' things—nobody but a girl could write them."

"But, Bertie, I've heard of boys keeping journals."

"Ah, but not journals like yours; it's only girls who can write about nothing."

"Oh, Bertie!" I cried.

But he sprang up, and suddenly took me, laughing, by the shoulders.

"Come away, and see Di and me run races," he called out. "Do you hear, Katie; you're not to be cross!"

So I laughed too, and was just about to put away my book and go with him, when Di ran into the room, calling that papa wanted Bertie; so off he went by himself,—or at least with Di following him; and I opened my journal again, and have been writing ever since.

Monday morning, July 5th.—I have all about Saturday to tell. I can't go back any further because I have not time—or room either, I think—and I *must* tell about Saturday. It was such a nice day from the very beginning. I must tell all about it! It is the last thing, I am afraid, that I shall be able to tell in this poor old journal.

The sun was shining so brightly when I awoke in the morning, and I got up feeling so well. The first person who wished me a happy birthday was dear old Hannah. She came to my bedside, lame as she still is, and kissed me awake. She had told me before that she would walk on my birthday, and she kept her word; and I was glad to see her on her feet again. The house has never looked quite right since Hannah has been lying down.

I got up as soon as she awakened me, and I was just dressed when some quick steps came across the hall, and some one rapped at my door. I thought that it was Bertie, so, without speaking, I went at once to the door and opened it.

"Oh, you're all ready!" he exclaimed, as he saw

me. "I thought I should have had to waken you!"

"What a notion!" I said, laughing.

"I thought it very likely," he answered; "but, as you're ready, come out; they're all in the meadow."

"In the meadow!" I echoed; "why what can they be doing in the meadow at this time in the morning?"

"Oh come away, and you will see," he said, laughing. "There's something there for you to look at."

He seemed in high spirits, so without asking any more questions I went away with him to the garden. As he told me, they were all in the meadow, and I was met, as soon as we opened the gate, by a succession of birthday salutations; but I am rather ashamed to say, that even while they were going on I was thinking a good deal of something else, for, standing at a few paces distance from us, and cropping away at the grass as if it felt quite at home, was the most charming little bay pony that I think I ever saw!

"Papa—what's this?" I asked, very much excited, the instant the greetings were over.

"I believe natural historians have agreed to call it a pony, my dear," he answered gravely; at which the others laughed, and I exclaimed,—

"Oh, you know I didn't mean that! Of course I know it's a pony; but I mean, what has it come here for?"

"That is a singular fancy, Katie, to ask one question when you mean another," papa said; but my stepmother would not let him teaze me, and answered for him,—

"Suppose it has come to see how Katie looks on the back of it?"

I thought for a moment that she was joking too; but when I glanced at the others, they were all looking and smiling at me; not as if they were playing me a trick, but so kindly and nicely; and then I cried out, "Oh, papa, is it really?" half believing, and yet afraid still to hope too much.

But it was for me indeed; papa had bought it for my birthday present!

"We couldn't bear to have you always separated from us in our walks, Katie. Now we can be all together, my darling," he said, so warmly.

I did not know how to thank him, I was so delighted. Of all things that he could have given me, I think this pony is what I should most choose to have. I have so longed to ride all my life, but *now* to have a pony belonging to me is more than it ever could have been before: it almost makes me forget that I am lame. And such a beautiful creature as this is too! So soft and sleek, with a tail coming nearly to the ground, and a long thick mane, and not a white hair upon it except one spot like a star on its forehead. And so gentle! It let us all come about it, and stroke it, and give it grass to eat, and it never seemed to be frightened a bit.

"When's Katie to get on it? I want to see Katie on it!" Di's little voice presently began to call impatiently.

"Yes, isn't Katie to have a ride at once?" Bertie asked eagerly.

But both papa and my stepmother insisted upon

there being no riding before breakfast, so that had to be given up, and we only stayed a few minutes longer, looking at my pony, and talking about it, and then in a body we turned to go back to the house.

But suddenly as we were going home a thought struck me. How it had not come before—only that I was too delighted perhaps to have time for it—I cannot think.

"Papa!" I called quickly.

"Well, dear?" he said, and he came to my side.

"Papa, isn't this pony the thing you said I was not to have if you gave Bertie his boat?"

"That's *your* version of the matter, Katie," he answered laughing, "I only put it to you *whether* you would give up the pony for the boat?"

"And you didn't really mean that I was not to have it? Oh papa dear," I exclaimed, "how good you are!"

"Well, would you be content now to give the pony up, Katie?" he asked.

He was smiling rather mischievously, as if he

thought I should hesitate, but I looked up laughing, and said quickly—

"For Bertie's boat? oh yes!"

And then he laughed too, and said after a moment, so kindly, that I deserved both, and everything else he could give me—my dear father!

We had breakfast, and when breakfast was over, then came my ride. I had it in the meadow, because papa thought that at my first attempt it would be better not to go any further; and indeed nothing can be nicer than the meadow is for riding in. Thomas had saddled the pony while we were at breakfast, and it was all ready when we came out again.

I got mounted with a little pain, but I shall be able to do it more easily soon, I hope, and then papa gave me the reins, and Bertie took the bridle, and off we set together, with the rest following us.

So nice and kind and careful Bertie was! I don't think I should have been afraid to have been left to manage my pony alone, but he would not let me; he held the bridle the whole time; even when after

a little he made me begin to trot, he would run all the way beside me, laughing at me when I exclaimed that he must be tired, and quite refusing to stop unless I was tired myself; and he was so thoughtful all the time, keeping my cloak round me, and showing me everything that I ought to do—so patiently and kindly.

It was such a charming ride! It was so delightful, after all these six sluggish months, to have the feeling of being in quick motion again; to see myself passing over the ground so swiftly, and feel the wind blowing on my face, and beating back my hair, just as it used to do before my lameness came. It made me so happy—so well. "Why, you've got colour in your cheeks, white rose!" Bertie cried once, and I told him laughing that it was no wonder, for I hadn't felt as I felt then for months and months.

I was so sorry when my ride came to an end; I think if it hadn't been that Bertie had to go to Mr. Hartwell's, we should have stayed out in the meadow all the morning; but when he had to go we did not care to remain without him, so all the rest of us

came into the house; and then presently I begged Di off from her lessons, and she and I sat all the rest of the morning in the garden together,—I reading to her for a good while; and then, when we were tired of that, she coming and laying her dear little head upon my shoulder, and both of us talking about all kinds of things, some wise and some foolish.

It was such a lovely day, with a blue sky without a cloud, and a sleepy summer hum in the air, and now and then a rustling of green leaves, making such a fresh pleasant sound as the wind came across the trees. The whole day long we scarcely were indoors at all. After lunch we were *all* out—papa and my stepmother, and Di, and I. We went up to the wood, and sat down there under the trees, and papa read "Marmion" to us. It was so nice! He read till Bertie came from Mr. Hartwell's, and then, when Bertie joined us, we all together lay on the grass, and talked till dinner time. I think we were very happy: I know *I* was. It was so warm at that time, that though it was proposed that I should have

my pony, and that we should go up the hill, we all voted for lying still instead. "It's ten times nicer here than anywhere!" Bertie cried. He had thrown himself down in front of Di, and was lying with his eyes shut, and his arms stretched out—a perfect picture of enjoyment; and we all laughed as he opened his eyes for a moment to say that, and then unanimously agreed that he was right, and that no one of us would move from where we were till dinner time. And none of us did. I think our only sorrow was that dinner came too soon.

When it was over, papa and Bertie went away and left us for a little. They went down to the river to see that the boat was quite ready, and to get one of the Hutchinsons to go with us, for papa insisted upon having some one along with us who knew the river. They were back again by seven, and then, as soon as we had had tea, we dressed and set off for our row.

We had a pleasant little walk down to the river, and then for quite an hour and a half we were upon the water. We stayed out until long after the sun

had set. It was a most delicious evening, with hardly a breath of wind, and the water so bright and clear, that we could often see the pebbles at the bottom. We did not row all the time: for a good while, as we came home, we just let the boat go slowly along with the stream, and I think, though it had all been so pleasant, that I almost liked that time best of all, for the motion was so very very gentle,—so soft, and gliding, and dreamy; and, as we went along, presently we began to sing: duets, and trios, and quartetts—and even quintetts, for papa himself got infected by the general enthusiasm at last, and once I even thought I heard Hutchinson break out into a sepulchral bass,—but, rather to my relief, it turned out to be only some creaking of the boat, at his end of it.

And when we had all sung together for some time, with great fun and laughing, then we grew quieter, and my stepmother sang alone; some boat songs first, and then a song that she and we all are so fond of—Schubert's beautiful "Ave Maria." It seemed more beautiful than it had ever done before: the

evening was so very still and lovely, and it seemed to creep over the water, and swell far away into new sounds, as if some other voice was taking it up. It was like a hymn rather than a song,—so soft, and solemn, and beautiful; it made us all very quiet: it was like the evening; just such a song as one would sing upon a summer evening at sunset.

As I sat listening, it made me think about other things; about old past things; about this day three years ago. Oh, dear mother—dear mother! I thought of her as she stood amongst us that day,—so beautiful, so good, so kind to every one, so loving and dear to me! I thought of many other days before and after that one; and then of that last day of all when I saw her lying dead; and it seemed to me that I felt more than I had ever done before how Bertie was right when he said that no other love could come across the love for one's own father and mother. I know it now: it is like something that stands apart from all other things: new affections have come, and have spread all over my life, but my love for my mother has never changed, or even mingled with

them. I thought, as I sat looking at the sunset, that it was like the blue sky beyond the golden clouds; far off and nearly hidden sometimes, but always there—above, and beyond, and separate from all other things. And I was so glad, and I could look upon them all—upon my stepmother, and Bertie, and Di—and feel only love, and joy, and gratitude, and no pain at all, except the pain for my own rebelliousness so long.

It was quite twilight when at last we reached the little stone steps again, where we get out. It had been so pleasant! I looked longingly over the bright smooth water as I rose up, so sorry that the end had come.

"It's just what it used to be at home, Bertie;" Di said, with a sentimental little sigh, as they two went homewards together, hand-in-hand.

"Only there's one thing better in it, Di, and one worse," Bertie said.

"What, Bertie?"

"Why, there's Katie, and there isn't Windermere. Which is best, Di?"

"Oh, but they're not a bit alike!" she exclaimed, opening her blue eyes.

And then, with a merry mischievous look, he turned to me.

"Which is best, Katie?"

"I've a good mind to say *I* am," I answered, laughing.

"Oh, vanity!" he exclaimed, "setting yourself up above Windermere!"

"You shouldn't have put it into my head, then," I said.

"Oh, it was there, I'm afraid, before I put it!" he answered, shaking his head; and then, breaking into a little laugh, he came to my side, and we walked home, all together.

It was ten o'clock when we got in, and so little Di went off at once to bed, and then we had prayers and supper as usual. And then, like all pleasant things, the day came to an end.

"You're looking decidedly older, Katie," papa said gravely, holding me back as I came to say good-night to him: "I see a great change in you since yesterday."

"Oh, papa, how rude you are!" I cried, laughing.

"Ah, you think everything rudeness that isn't a compliment, Katie. Another sign of advancing years," he said, shaking his head.

"*I* look older than Kate does," Bertie broke in, —whether because he really thought it, or only out of politeness, I don't know; but papa turned upon him at once.

"*You*, you little fellow?" he exclaimed, "you don't look as if you had ten years upon your shoulders!"

"Oh, papa!" I cried, and my stepmother broke out laughing; but papa would not be quiet.

"It's the truth! When I first saw him, I wasn't sure whether he or Di was eldest."

"How long did you take to find out, sir?" Bertie asked.

"How long? Hm—I suppose I guessed it in a day or two," papa said carelessly.

Bertie looked at him for an instant, and then broke into a good-humoured laugh.

"I'll be taller than any of you some day!" he exclaimed.

"Well, never mind your height, my boy; try to be *better* than the rest of us, and we'll be content with that," papa answered, suddenly changing his jesting tone for one that was quite earnest and affectionate. He shook hands with him too so warmly, and said: "God bless you, my dear boy," as he let him go. And such a bright glow came for a moment to Bertie's cheek! I think that the slightest bit of kindness in the world would never be thrown away upon Bertie.

We went away both together.

"Sister Katie, has it been a good birthday?" he asked gaily.

"A good one?—oh yes, very good indeed!" I said heartily.

"Birthdays are nice things, Katie!" he exclaimed.

"Very!" I answered, laughing; and then, for we had reached my door, we said good-night to one another, and went our separate ways: and so my birthday ended.

And my journal is ending too with my birthday. Here I am at last, on the last leaf, and Bertie's wish is likely to come to pass, I think, for nobody has made me an offer of a new book yet. My poor old journal!—how exactly it has lasted me out the three years! I'm sorry to part with it now: I feel as if I should like to linger over this page; as I like, when old years are going out, to linger over the last day and the last hour;—and it's worse with me than with the old year, for my old journal is going, and no sign of a new one coming, that I can see!

I was just writing this, and thinking of the most imposing and affecting way of making my farewells, when Di, from the middle table where she was writing her copy, set up a cry of distress.

"Oh, Katie, there's a big blot come!" she exclaimed: and forthwith, copy-book in hand, up she came in great haste to me to get something done with it.

A very big blot it certainly was, and a most unconscionable quantity of ink must Di have been

taking up in her pen to have been able to make it; but, being done, there was nothing for it but to make the best of it; so I took my blotting-paper, and began very carefully to suck it up, and then with my penknife, commenced scratching away at it. And, while I was in the very middle of the operation, in came Bertie from Mr. Hartwell's.

"What are you doing, Di? Are you helping Katie with her journal?" he asked gaily, as he came up to us.

"No, no; it's a great blot, Bertie," Di said.

Di was very grave about her blot, and was standing by my side, watching the operation of scraping it out with great solemnity and interest.

"And how did the great blot come, Di?" he asked. But he didn't give her time to answer, for, bending over me, he suddenly caught my hand, exclaiming impetuously,—

"Oh, Katie, stop! Who ever saw a blot being scraped out like that?"

I thought I had been doing it rather well,—at least, the blot seemed coming very quickly out,—but Bertie

spoke with such authority that it was impossible to dispute the matter; so I said very humbly,—

"Is it not right? Then would you do it, please?" And he took the penknife at once, and drawing in a chair between Di and me, set to work in a most business-like way.

"There, Katie; isn't that well done?" he exclaimed, looking up, after a minute, rather complacently.

It certainly *was* well done. It was almost, as dear Di said, as if there hadn't been a blot at all.

"Tell me the next time you make a blot in your journal, and I'll take it out for you," he said.

"Oh, Bertie, it's too late," I exclaimed. "Look here!" and I held up my bare board of a cover to him.

I spoke a little ruefully, hoping that he would look on the coming decease of my poor journal with some sort of sympathy; but instead of that, all he did was to strike his hand emphatically upon the table, and cry out, "Bravo!"

"Oh, but Bertie," I exclaimed, "I'm sorry:—at least a little."

"Then I'll be sorry too!" he said.

I turned round, laughing, and looked at him He was looking very nice, leaning down with his bright face; but not as if he *was* sorry, certainly, a bit.

"Bertie, dear," I said suddenly.

"Well, Katie?"

"Bertie, some day, if you like, you shall read my journal, and then—"

"Well?" he said gaily, again.

"Well, then I think you will understand why I'm sorry that it's done now."

"Oh, Bertie, it isn't me! it's the pen!" broke wildly from poor Di. "Here's another blot!"

That was half an hour ago. Since then dear Di has got her second blot scraped out, and her copy finished, and she and Bertie are away at play in the garden together. Their voices are coming in to me through the open window, and I hear other voices

too, besides their's,—papa's and my stepmother's. They are talking to them now, and there comes the sound of my stepmother's beautiful joy-bell laughter, and a great mingling of other laughters echoing hers, all sounding together, so gay and glad. And I, as I sit here, am glad too; with all that I can ask to make me happy, and scarcely a wish left in all the world,—not even a wish for another Journal.

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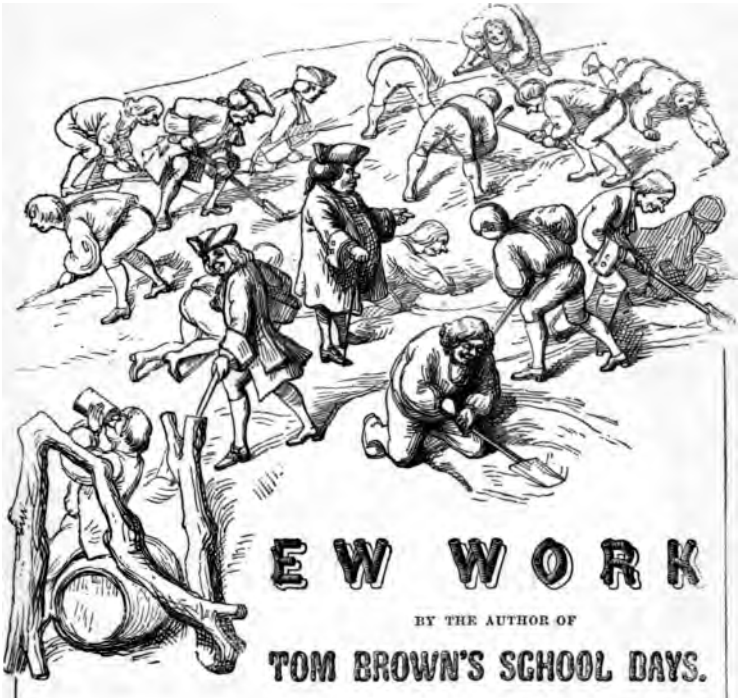

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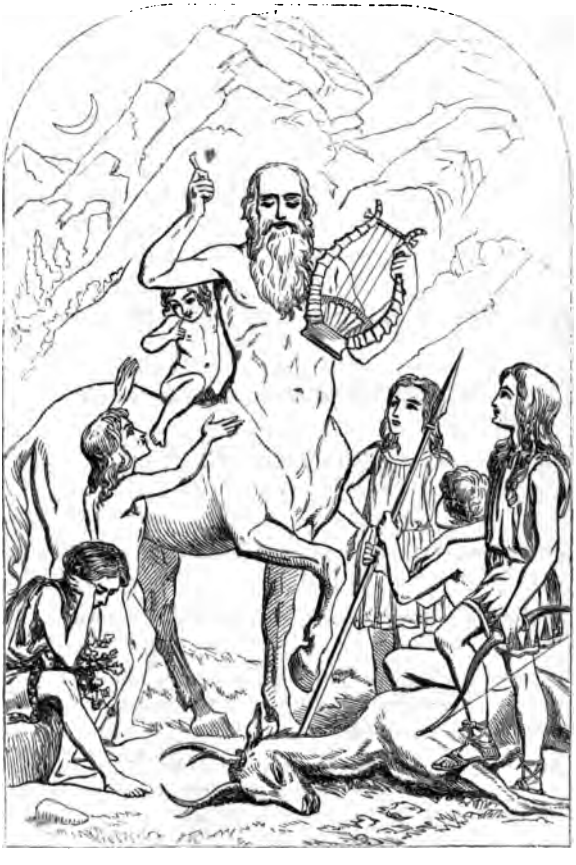

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